TAUNTON'S JULY 1997 NO. 21

Grilling Lime-Ginger Chicken

A Perfect Picnic Menu

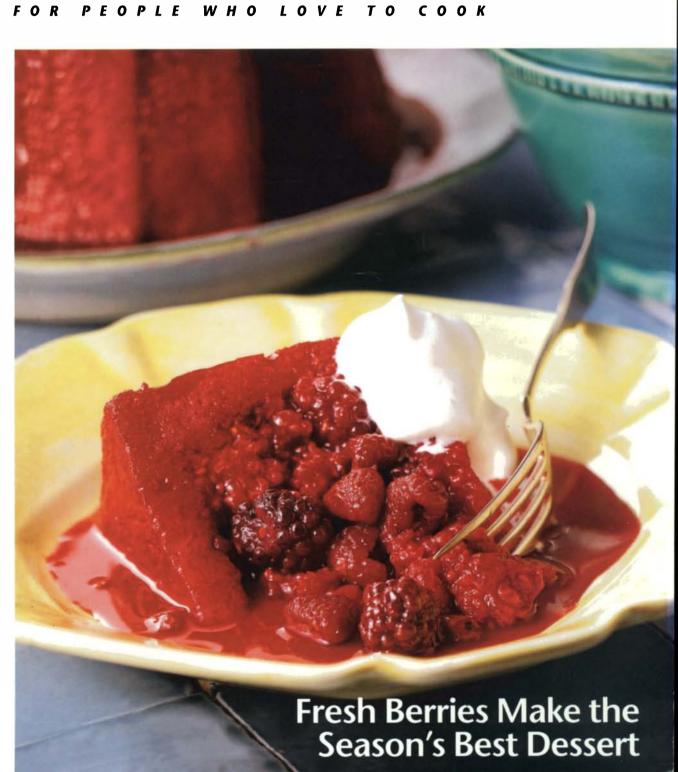
Easy Summer Pasta Sauces

Vegetables with Vibrant Dressings

Our Favorite Grilling Gear

Stir-Fried Noodles Thai-Style





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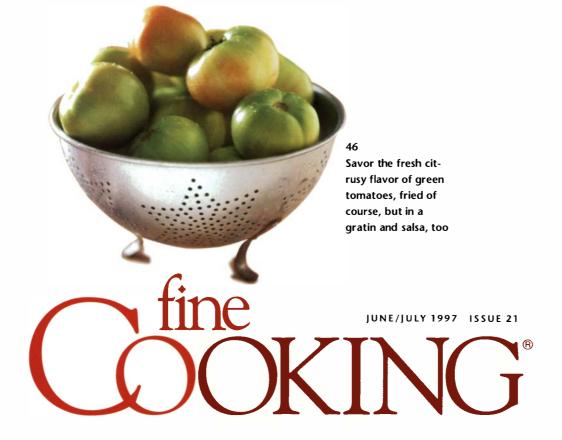
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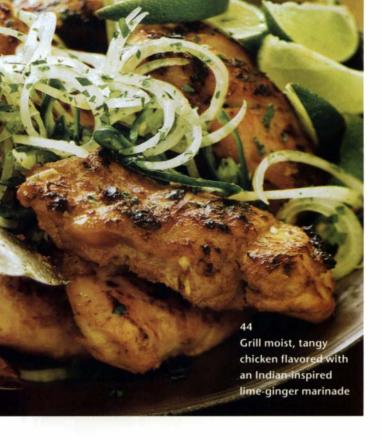




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Cover photo, Mark Thomas. These pages: top left, Susan Kahn; bottom left, Rita Maas; above, Mark Thomas; below, Ben Fink.



55 Bake buttery-crisp crusts for summer fruit tarts with a no-fail mixer method

A neat trick for clarifying stock

Your article on chicken stock (Fine Cooking #19) was wonderful. I work as a chef, so I often make stocks for one hundred or more, and I have a much easier way to clarify. Just add a couple of lightly beaten egg whites to your skimmed and now simmering stock and stir it with a whisk for two or three minutes. Take the pot from the heat and scoop out the egg whites (which will now look puffy and gray) with a slotted spoon. The stock will be as clear as a Rocky Mountain stream.

> —Karen McLachlan, Edmonton, Alberta

Stuck on potstickers

I just had to write to say how much I appreciate your article on Chinese dumplings (*Fine*

Cooking #19). You're right about them being addictive: I'm obsessed.

During the seven years we lived in Calgary, Alberta, my husband and I ate them every week at our favorite haunt. Since we moved to London, ntario, we haven't

Ontario, we haven't been able to find them.

I mentioned my obsession at work, and two Chinese coworkers suggested a gyoza (Chinese dumpling) party. Ten of us made 400 dumplings and promptly ate 325 of them. Due to time constraints, we used store-bought wrappers, although my colleagues insisted that homemade wrappers are far superior. My friends' method was just as you describe in the article. Now I can go boldly

forward and make my own dumplings.

—Pat Beneteau, Delaware, Ontario

I need that anchovy hors d'oeuvre

Paul Bertolli's article about anchovies was very interesting (Fine Cooking #18). Perhaps he knows the name of an hors d'oeuvre my sister-inlaw makes. It sounds like his anchoiade, but where he uses two teaspoons of parsley, she uses about two cups. Our family couldn't survive a party without it.

—Frances Rains, Foresthill, CA

Paul Bertolli replies: What you describe sounds to me like Italian salsa verde, literally "green sauce." Finely chopped or mortared parsley is the main ingredient of all salse verdi I've tasted, but variations can include a little mint and tarragon. Garlic and olive oil are standard, and the sauce may include capers, anchovies, and lemon juice or vinegar.

I like to keep the sauce simple: I make a thick paste of half chopped and half mortared parsley, which gives a very appealing smooth/coarse texture and vital punch of flavor. I add a liberal amount of finely chopped salt-cured anchovies (prepared as described in the article), garlic, good fruity olive oil, red-wine vinegar, salt, and pepper. Salsa verde is a delicious sauce for dipping vegetables or bread, or to serve with grilled or boiled meat, poultry, or strongflavored fish like swordfish. Paul Bertolli is a co-owner of Oliveto, a restaurant in Oakland,

California. He's a contributing

editor to Fine Cooking. •



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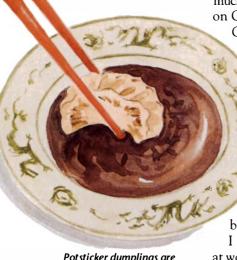
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Potsticker dumplings are fried on one side for a crisp texture.

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4 globe artichokes

- Juice of 1 lemon 2 links Italian sweet sausage,
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- crumbled (optional) 1/3 cup Bertolli Classico Olive Oil

- 1 tsp. minced garlic 2 cups cubed (about 1/4-inch) day-old Italian bread (crusts trimmed)
- 2 Tbsp. pignoli (pine nuts) Salt and freshly ground black pepper 2 Tbsp.grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- To prepare artichokes: Cut stems off, remove small leaves from base. Lay artichoke on side;

slice off tip of artichoke about 1-inch from top. Use scissors to trim off prickly tips of remaining leaves. Rub cut edges with lemon juice to prevent darkening. Place artichokes in saucepan small enough to hold snugly. Add water to cover and 1/2 tsp. salt. Cover; cook until tender, about 20-25 min. or until a leaf can be pulled out easily. Drain; cool until lukewarm. To remove choke, spread center leaves; reach down in center and pull out purple tipped prickly leaves. Use small spoon to scoop out fuzzy part from heart.

To make stuffing: Brown sausage (if using); set aside. Heat Bertolli Classico olive oil and garlic in skillet until garlic begins to sizzle. Add crumbs, pignoli and cook; stirring, until bread is golden, about 5 min. Add sausage.

Coat small deep baking dish with olive oil; add artichokes. Spread leaves from center, creating an opening for stuffing. Lightly spoon stuffing into centers distributing ingredients evenly. Sprinkle tops evenly with cheese. Add 3 Tbsp. water to baking dish.

Cover with foil: bake at 350°F for 15 min. Uncover and bake until cheese browns, about 5 min. Serve warm or at room temperature. Serves 4.

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Have a question of general interest about cooking?

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Refrigerate garlic-infused oils and other flavored oils to prevent botulism.

Botulism and garlic oil

I love garlic-infused oil, but
I've heard that, in an anaerobic
environment, garlic can produce botulism. Is it safe to mix
garlic and olive oil in a food
processor and strain out the
garlic? Is it safe to suspend
roasted garlic cloves in olive oil?
—Louise A. Peterson,
Brooklyn, NY

Molly Stevens replies: Cases of botulism tied to homemade infused oils are very rare. The organism that causes botulism (Clostridium botulinum) is most commonly found in foods that are soil-grown, such as garlic and onions. Since it needs an anaerobic (oxygen-free) environment and warm temperatures to grow and become lethal, it remains harmless until the right conditions exist. But when you process garlic and oil and strain out the garlic. you don't remove the danger: just as the flavor of the garlic is released into the oil, so are any botulism organisms that

Roasting garlic before putting it in oil is certainly safer than using raw garlic, as long as the garlic is cooked until it's soft all the way through. Thorough cooking kills the botulism-causing organism before it has a chance to grow (see *Fine Cooking #12*, p. 41).

Even after adding roasted garlic to the oil, I still recommend refrigerating it (and all infused oils) as a precaution because botulism can't grow under refrigeration. Commercially made infused oils are processed at temperatures high enough to avoid such a risk.

Molly Stevens is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking.

Making white bread dough in a food processor

I've mastered whole-wheat bread dough in the food processor, but when I try to make white bread dough, I end up with a hot, sticky, liquid mess that forces the dough blade out of place. Any suggestions?

—Stephanie Daval, Princeton, NI

Maggie Glezer replies: Because a food processor operates at high speed, bread dough kneaded in it develops more quickly than if it's kneaded by hand. Either technique is fine; a food pro-

cessor is handy if you don't have the strength or stamina to knead for twenty minutes or more.

The problem with your particular dough is twofold. First, the dough is overheating during processing. To avoid this, I recommend that you use very cold liquids (some bakers even use ice water) and process the dough in thirty-second intervals, hand-kneading it on the counter for a couple of turns in between each whir in the processor, until you get a very smooth dough that stretches without ripping. The dough closest to the processor blade heats up more, and hand kneading helps redistribute and release some of that builtup heat. (Handling the dough also helps you monitor its development.)

Second, whole-wheat flour absorbs more liquid than white flour does, so your whole-wheat dough was probably stiffer and not as likely to liquefy. Try reducing the liquid in your white dough by a tablespoon or two to see if that gives you a less runny result.

Maggie Glezer teaches and writes about bread making in Atlanta. ◆



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When I was growing up on my grandfather's farm, deciding what type of potato to use was easy. He grew russets in his big vegetable garden, and that was what we used—no matter what we were making.

Today the choice isn't so easy. There's a huge variety of potatoes to pick from: white, yellow, red, brown, or purple; tiny as marbles or weighing up to a pound; oval, perfectly round, or long and narrow. But don't choose a potato for its color, shape, or size alone; the most important criterion

for selecting a potato is its starch content.

STARCH DETERMINES A POTATO'S PURPOSE

Knowing the starch level of a potato can help you choose one that will bake up fluffy and light or hold its shape in a salad.

High-starch potatoes have a light, mealy texture. They're best for baking, mashing, and french-frying. According to food scientist Harold McGee, the cells of a high-starch potato separate when cooked. That means fluffy baked pota-

toes and mashed potatoes that readily soak up milk and butter and hold plenty of air when whipped. But high-starch potatoes also absorb water, so they fall apart when boiled, making them not much good for salads.

Medium-starch potatoes are called all-purpose potatoes. They're moister than

Russets (high starch) are the consummate Idaho "bakers." They're ideal for making potato pancakes, french fries, shoestring potatoes, and heavenly mashed potatoes.

high-starch potatoes and hold their shape a bit better. I like them best roasted or made into gratins. They're superb when cut into chunks, seasoned with olive oil and garlic,

to roas

Yellow Finns (medium starch)
have the best flavor of the allpurpose potatoes. These
golden-yellow, creamytextured potatoes are great for
gratins or roasting, and they
combine beautifully with russets
to make mashed potatoes or with
roasted garlic as a filling for ravioli.

Purple potatoes (medium starch) have always been used in the Peruvian Andes, the ancestral home of most modern potatoes. They're good steamed, and they make delicious potato salad, too. Or turn them into a smooth-textured purple purée.

White potatoes (medium starch) may be round or oval (called long white potatoes). Both are ideal all-purpose varieties. They're perfect for gratins. Try boiling them just until tender and then cut them into chunks and roast them in a hot oven for tender-fleshed potatoes with irresistibly crisp skins.

Photos except where noted: Scott Phillips



wrapped in foil, and roasted in the oven or in the ashes of a low fire.

Low-starch potatoes are best for salads. Often called waxy potatoes, these have a more cohesive cell structure and hold their shape better than other types of potato.

NEW POTATOES REALLY ARE NEW

The term "new" refers to freshly harvested, immature potatoes of any variety. Look for them in late spring or early summer, at the very beginning of the potato harvest. They have thinner skins and slightly moister flesh than more mature potatoes. Choose hard ones with almost translucent skins. New potatoes are very perishable; use them within a few days of purchase. New potatoes of any variety are delicious steamed or boiled, mixed in salads, or roasted in foil.

"Creamer" is a term used to describe any potato less than an inch in diameter. The designation refers only to size. Creamers may be new potatoes or fully mature small ones.

PICK FIRM POTATOES AND KEEP THEM IN THE DARK

Regardless of variety, all potatoes should feel heavy and

cold) and dry. New potatoes can be refrigerated for a few days, but any potato that's stored too long at such a low temperature will take on an unpleasant sweetness as the starch converts to sugar.

Refuse to buy potatoes that show even a hint of green. They've been "lightstruck." The green indicates

the presence of solanine,

which is produced when

potatoes are exposed to light,

either in the field or after har-

vest. This mildly poisonous

alkaloid has a bitter flavor

that can cause an upset

stomach. If your pota-

you get them home, peel off all traces of the colored flesh before cooking.

COOK POTATOES WITH THEIR SKINS INTACT

Potatoes cooked in their skins will be more flavorful, hold their shape better, and absorb less water. Also, the skins come off much easier once the potatoes have been cooked.

If you must peel potatoes before they're cooked (when making a gratin, for example), put the peeled potatoes in a bowl of water with a bit of lemon juice or vinegar to prevent them from turning brown. But remember that they'll absorb water, so don't leave them there too long.

Alan Trangren forages at farms and markets throughout northern California to fill the larders at Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California.

Yukon Golds (medium to low starch) are similar to Yellow Finns in shape and color, but they're slightly waxier and better for steaming or boiling. They're not the best for gratins or salads because they tend to fall apart if even slightly overcooked.

High-starch potatoes are the classic bakers—fluffy, light, and eager to soak up plenty of butter.

firm, never soft, wrinkled, or blemished. And try not to buy potatoes in plastic bags since it's hard to evaluate them.

Store potatoes away from light in a place that's

cool (but not

salads, or roasted in foil.

toes turn green after

Red potatoes (medium to low starch) hold their

shape when boiled and sliced. Steam and butter them or use them in potato salads. These are especially attractive and delicious when "new." Leave the tender skins on to contrast with their white interior, or peel off a spiral band of skin before cooking. Larger, more mature red potatoes tend to have a slightly higher starch content.

Ruby crescents (low starch) are among the many slender fingerling types. They have reddish-brown skin and fine-textured white flesh that holds its shape well—perfect for potato salads. Other fingerling varieties to look for are Russian Banana, Butterfinger, and Rose Finn Apple, with its rose-pink skin and yellow flesh that's blushed with red.

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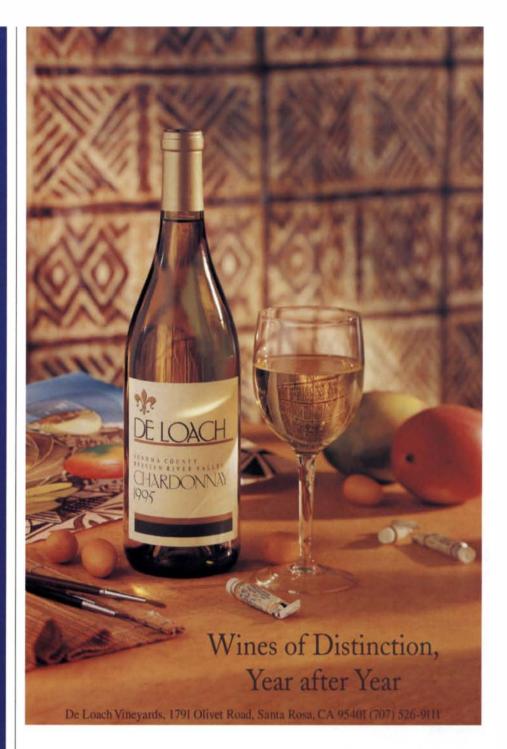


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IUNE/ JULY 1997

How to Make a Great Green Salad

veryone knows how to make a green salad—just wash, dress, and toss. But few know how to make a really great green salad, like those served in the best restaurants. where tender, fresh greens are handled with care from garden to plate and tossed ever so gently with just the right amount of oil and vinegar. Wonderful salads aren't hard to make; they just require care.

START WITH THE **FRESHEST GREENS**

With all the varieties of lettuce available, a green salad can take on a whole range of flavors, textures, and colors. My own versions depend on the time of the year and the greens that look best at the market.

In summer, I make salads from equal parts of vibrant basil and slightly peppery arugula. In winter, radicchio, endive, and escarole make one

of my favorite after-dinner salads; these bitter greens have a marvelous way of making me feel less full after a heavy meal.

Whatever you choose, start with the freshest greens you can find, those that appear just-picked. Look at them closely, feel them, smell them; if no one's looking, take a small bite. If your heart was set on radicchio but it looks wilted or smells past its prime, pick another slightly bitter green, such as endive or escarole, instead.

CUT THE LEAVES, BUT KEEP THEIR SHAPE

I have a horror of salads made with leaves cut into bite-size pieces, a habit that probably evolved in the days when it was considered impolite to eat salad with a knife. If the leaves are cut too small, they lose their distinctive shapes and a lot of their crunch. On the other hand, you don't want to serve giant leaves that won't fit on the plate or that are difficult to maneuver.

Greens with small leaves, such as arugula, basil, purslane, watercress, and young spinach, should be stemmed as shown below but the leaves left whole. Larger leaves, from greens such as romaine, large red oak leaf, and escarole, should be trimmed according to the directions below.

To determine the amount of greens needed, figure on about a handful of salad per person; double the amount if the salad is a main course.

WASH GREENS GENTLY

Many greens grow in sandy soil. If you don't wash them well, you'll end up with grit in your salad. But simply rinsing your greens under running water won't get rid of all of the dirt. Instead, submerge them in a large bowl or in a sink full of cool water, as shown on p. 16.

Every time a salad leaf is bent, small cracks form on its



salad plate. Try different greens to get to know their taste and texture.

Trim the leaves, but keep their character



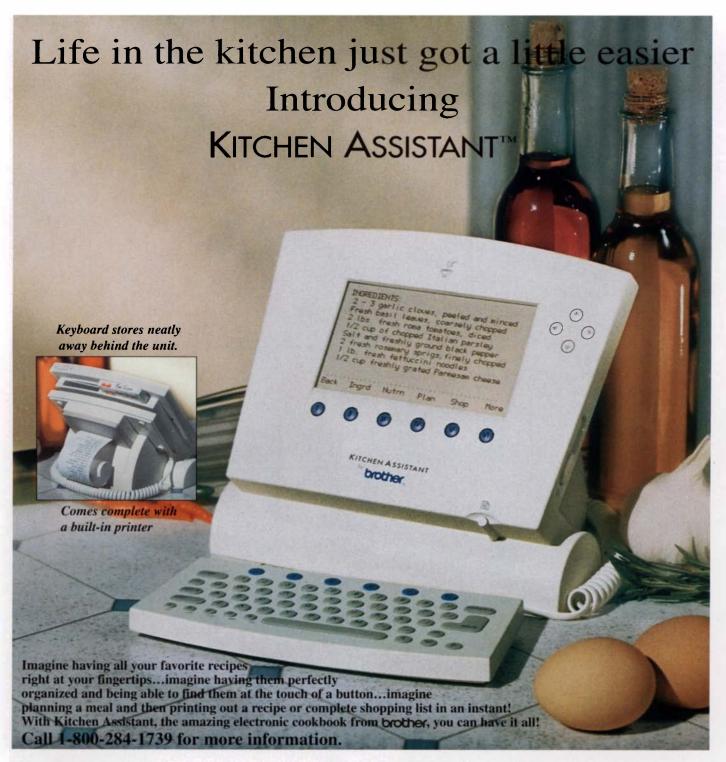
Tear large leaves along the central rib. Pull apart romaine, large oak leaf, and other big-leaf greens this way; they'll retain more of their character.



Trim out tough ribs completely. Fold the leaf lengthwise and gently pull up on the stalk, ripping the rib out as you go. Or use a knife to cut it out.



Cut away thick, woodystems. Use a sharp knife to slice off stems like those found on arugula and watercress, shown above.



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surface, causing it to wilt, so be gentle when you handle your greens. To get the greens out of their soaking bowl, don't just grab them. Spread your hands out beneath them in the water and let them rest on your hands as you lift them from the water. This method also ensures that you'll leave the grit behind in the bottom of the bowl. Repeat with fresh water until there's no sand left in the bottom of the bowl.

DRY GREENS COMPLETELY

Any excess water on the leaves will dilute the flavor of your dressing, which also won't cling well to wet greens. A salad spinner, shown at far right, does a good job of drying greens. Don't cram in the greens: instead, dry them in batches. Don't spin too hard or the leaves will be crushed in the spinner. If you don't have a spinner, spread out the leaves on a clean dishtowel and roll them up gently, or pat them gently with another towel.

DRESS GREENS SIMPLY

I like a simple vinaigrette for my greens. Traditional vinaigrettes consist of three parts oil to one part vinegar or lemon juice. But that ratio will vary depending on the oils and vinegars you use and on your own taste. I almost always increase the amount of oil, for example, if I'm using a strongflavored vinegar.

For the best flavor, use the highest-quality oils and vinegars you can find. Experiment with different varieties of each. Stronger-flavored oils and vinegars, such as nut oils and balsamic vinegar, are best reserved for heartier greens, such as watercress, arugula, and the chicory family.

The secret to making a vinaigrette is that, most of the time, you don't have to make

Wash carefully, dry thoroughly, and toss gently



Clean your greens with a brief soak. Gently swirl the leaves in cool water to dislodge any grit, and then lift the greens out with loosely splayed fingers. The grit will stay behind in the bottom of the bowl. Rinse out the bowl and repeat until there's no grit left.



Make the vinaigrette in a separate container until you get an eye for the amount needed. Pour in just enough to lightly coat the greens; you can always add a little more.



Get greens good and dry with a salad spinner. After a couple of spins, drain the bowl, rearrange the leaves, and spin again. Repeat until there's no more water in the bowl.



Toss until the greens are well-coated. Use two large spoons or your hands for gently tossing. Taste a leaf, adjust the seasonings, and serve right away.

one at all. To make a traditional vinaigrette, the oil is slowly whisked into the vinegar or the two are shaken together in a closed container to create an emulsion. But when making a tossed salad, the greens can be evenly coated without an emulsion. In fact, I usually dress my salad right in its bowl. I sprinkle the greens with salt, pepper, and vinegar, pour in the oil and toss.

But until you learn to judge the right amounts of oil and vinegar by sight, you might need to measure the ingredients into a separate bowl first. One tablespoon oil to one teaspoon vinegar are the measurements to remember for the traditional ratio.

You can also mix the vinaigrette in the bottom of your salad bowl, cross your salad spoons in the bowl, and then gently lay the greens on top of the spoons. This way, everything is handy to toss at the table, but the greens won't be sitting in the dressing.

Never dress your salad on salad plates. Use a bowl that leaves you plenty of room to toss; any excess oil and vinegar will be left behind in the bowl instead of in a puddle on the plate.

Toss gently but thoroughly. Use your hands or two large spoons to gently turn the greens over in the bowl until they're well coated. Taste a leaf and add a little oil, vinegar, salt, or pepper until the salad is seasoned correctly. Serve the salad immediately or the dressing will cause it to wilt.

James Peterson is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. He's the author of Fish & Shellfish (Morrow, 1996). ◆

16 FINE COOKING

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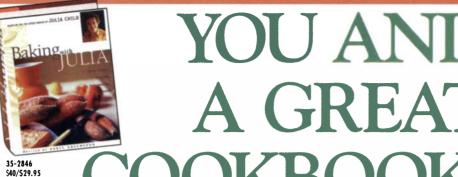


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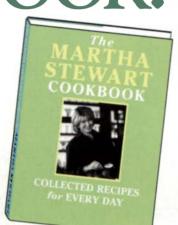
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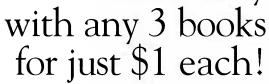


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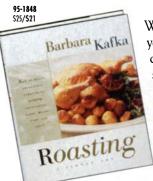








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Fire-roasted flavor in Spanish *piquillo* peppers



Authentic piquillo peppers are wood-smoked and hand-peeled in the Navarra region of Spain.

A pepper in a jar becomes a gastronomic star when it's a genuine pimiento del piquillo from Spain. These pimientos (the Spanish word for all kinds of peppers, though in English it refers only to cooked red peppers) are strictly artisan products: they're harvested in the northeast region of Navarra, fire-roasted, handpeeled, and usually packed without preservatives. The flavor is so sublime that even four-star restaurants in Spain use them right from the jar.

Gently piquant, these thin-fleshed pimientos del piquillo are not more than four inches long, and their slender shape narrows to a slightly twisted peak—piquillo in Spanish. They're marvelous on their own, lightly sautéed with a touch of garlic and extra-virgin olive oil, or used in countless preparations. In Spain, they're often stuffed with meat, fish, or vegetables and bathed in a variety of sauces.

All *piquillo* peppers (pronounced pee-KEE-yoh), however, aren't created equal. Two of the best brands are available through the mail: El Navarrico comes in 225g jars

(about half a pound) for \$10 (from Zingerman's, 313/769-1625); and Almanaque comes in 230g jars for \$5.50 and 285g jars for \$6.50 (from The Spanish Table, 206/682-2827).

Penelope Casas is the author of The Foods & Wines of Spain and iDelicioso!, both reviewed in this issue on p. 82.

Piping hot coffee from a press-pot-in-a-thermos

Coffee made in a French press pot is rich, full-bodied, and intensely flavorful. It's also often lukewarm. Because the coffee must steep for four to six minutes, it starts to cool before it even makes it into your mug. Now Thermos Nissan has introduced a vacuum-insulated coffee press that not only makes wonder-



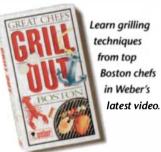
The Thermos Nissan press pot keeps coffee drinkably hot for hours.

ful coffee, but that also keeps it hot for hours.

Thermos Nissan claims to keep the java at a piping 147°F for two hours, but three and a half hours after I brewed it, my coffee was still drinkably hot.

This pot is such an obvious idea that you have to wonder why it took so long for someone to think of it. Now that it's here, you have to wonder why anyone would use any other kind of press pot. Available by mail for \$59 from Solutions (800/342-9988) and from Peet's Coffee (800/999-2132). Jan Newberry is the managing editor of Fine Cooking.

Grilling tips from hot Boston chefs



Check out Weber's newest instructional grilling video, featuring chefs Jasper White, Jody Adams, Gordon Hamersley, and Jacky Robert. These chefs use gas and charcoal grills to create exciting dishes, from grilled lobster to brick chicken.

To receive the video (\$5.99 for shipping), call Weber's grilling hotline (800/474-5568), open again this year, from April 1 through Labor Day, Monday through Friday, 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. (CDT).

Susie Middleton is an associate editor for Fine Cooking.

Mission olives and Meyer lemons make "O" olive oil

On a recent trip to Italy, I was delighted by some citrusy-

tasting olive oils. These weren't infused oils, but oils made by crushing tangerines, oranges, and lemons, skin and all, with olives.

When I returned to the States, I was excited to discover that two enterprising Californians, Greg Hinson and Cristina Salas-Porras, had learned the Italian procedure. They use a stateof-the-art olive press in Mill Valley to combine native California Meyer lemons and Mission olives into "O"



sh. Olive Oil.

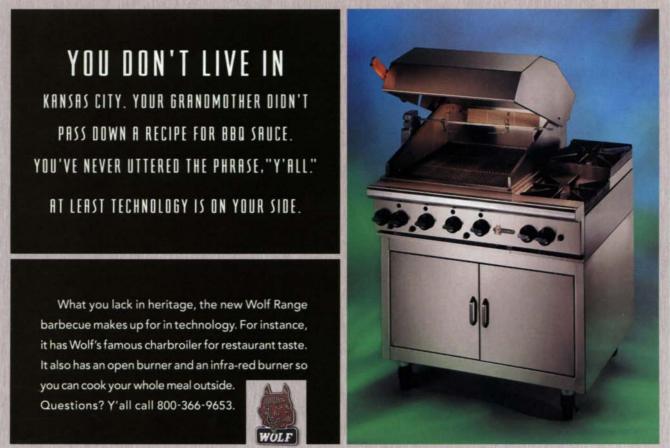
The combination is sublime. The Meyer lemon, a lemon-mandarin hybrid, adds hints of orange and lime and makes "O" a versatile oil that can be drizzled on a salad with no added vinegar or lemon juice. "O" jazzes up roast chicken and grilled fish, and it adds new life to homemade mayonnaise. An 8.8-ounce bottle is \$21 from Katz & Co. (800/455-2305). Peggy Knickerbocker is a writer based in San Francisco. Her book, Olive Oil: Tree to Table

will be published by Chronicle,

this fall.

Photos: Scott Phillips







A pastry blender chops hardcooked eggs with less mess.

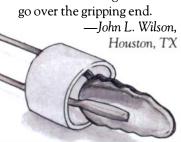
A neater way to chop eggs

Use a pastry blender to chop hard-cooked eggs. The blender won't chop the eggs too finely, and it's much easier and neater than using a knife.

—Peggy Makolondra, Sturgeon Bay, WI

Store tongs in PVC collars

Large tongs are one of the more useful kitchen tools, and I have several pair. Unfortunately, they're a pain to store. I finally came up with an inexpensive, simple solution. At the hardware store, I bought several ¾-inch PVC collars (connectors for plastic pipe) for less than 50 cents each. The collars slip over the handle of the tongs but won't go over the gripping end.



PVC collars keep tongs shut for easier storage.

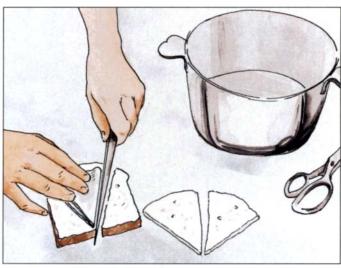
Make breadcrumbs in a coffee mill

When I need a cup of fresh breadcrumbs for meatloaf or for coating fish or chicken, I use my coffee mill. I simply tear bread into small pieces, toss them in the coffee mill, and pulse. I get perfectly even breadcrumbs in seconds.

—Bill Sweet, New Bern, NC

Keep chopped onion in check

When raw chopped onions are added to a salad, they can turn strong and bitter if the salad sits for an hour or more, even in the refrigerator. To prevent this, add about 1/4 cup white vinegar to a bowl of cold water. Put the onions in a strainer and quickly slosh



To cut perfect wedges of bread for the base layer of a summer pudding (see p. 68), use a parchment template. Trace a circle around the mold onto the parchment, cut out the circle, and fold it into eighths.

Make a paper template for summer pudding

Lining a round mold with bread to make a summer pudding or fruit charlotte can be tricky. Here's how to ensure your base layer of bread forms a perfect circle with no gaps.

Trace the base of the mold or tin on kitchen parchment and cut out the circle. Fold the circle in half, then in quarters, and finally in eighths. Put the paper on a slice of bread and use a knife to cut out a triangle. Repeat this with seven more pieces of bread, and you will have eight bread triangles that form a perfect circle for the base of the mold.

—Anne Disrude, Jersey City, NJ them in the vinegar and water. Don't rinse the onions: just add them to your salad. They'll stay mild and sweet for quite a while.

—Russ Shumaker, Richmond, VA

Mix and freeze extra dry ingredients

If you have favorite baking recipes that you make often, mix together an extra batch or two of the dry ingredients and freeze them in a zip-top bag. This saves time and keeps the ingredients fresher than if they were in the kitchen cabinet. It's especially helpful for breads that call for more than one kind of flour—you'll no longer have to lug





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To cut soft goat cheese, stretch a piece of dental floss tightly across the log and gently saw off medallions for crostini, salads, or cheese plates.

out three or four bags of flour each time you bake.

> -Michael Feldman, Hendersonville, NC

Use your pizza peel as a pastry board

To roll out pie crust on a pizza peel, set the peel on a slightly dampened dishtowel to steady it, dust with flour, and roll out the dough. Transfer the dough to the pie pan by setting the pan upside down on the dough and holding the pan steady while you invert the peel. The crust is now in position and ready for trimming.

—Ann Wolthuis. Holland, MI

Cut goat cheese with dental floss

To cut a log of soft goat cheese into individual servings, use dental floss. Tightly stretch a length of the floss perpendicular to the log, and then gently saw it back and forth to cut neat medallions without crushing the cheese.

> —Cameron Butler. Lewes, DE

Pit cherries neatly in a bag

When you're pitting cherries with a pitter, the juice splatters and stains everything it touches. I've found that using the tool inside a plastic bag contains the juice. As a bonus, the pits and stems are already gathered in the bag to be thrown away.

> ---Vicki McLain. Baytown, TX

Frozen plastic bottles chill soups quickly

To chill a large amount of liquid—like a hot soup off the stove—without watering it down, drop a clean plastic soda bottle or milk jug of frozen water into it. The cold will transfer to the soup, and



Pit cherries inside a plastic bag for easier cleanup.

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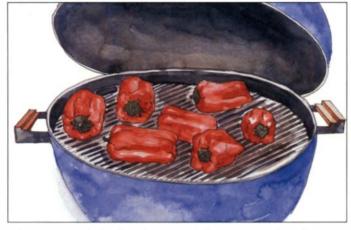
then you simply remove the bottle. Zip-top bags of ice can be used in smaller containers.

> —R.B. Himes, Vienna, OH

A better way to skin almonds

Here's a simple way to get those stubborn skins off almonds. After covering the almonds with boiling water and draining them, plunge them into an ice bath to cool. and drain again. The ice water further loosens the skins and stops the nuts from softening. After you skin the almonds, spread them on a baking sheet and warm them in a 350°F oven for 5 or 10 minutes to improve their texture.

> —Barbara C. White, Highland Park, NI



When you're finished grilling dinner, toss bell peppers onto the grill, cover it, and close the air vents. The residual heat will roast the peppers perfectly in about two hours.

Use leftover hot coals to roast peppers

When you've finished grilling steaks or chicken but your coals are still hot, put some bell peppers on the grill to roast. Cover the grill and close the air vents (or turn off the

gas). In an hour and a half to two hours, the peppers will be nicely roasted. Remove the skins, refrigerate the roasted peppers, and use them during the next week.

> —Liz Bader. White Plains, NY

Use ice packs to chill a water bath

The next time you use an ice bath to shock vegetables. stick an ice pack or two in a bowl of tap water for a few minutes: they'll chill the bath just as efficiently as ice cubes. This way, you'll always have enough ice on hand for drinks, instead of emptying your freezer trays of precious cubes.

> —Rog LaTouche, San Diego, CA

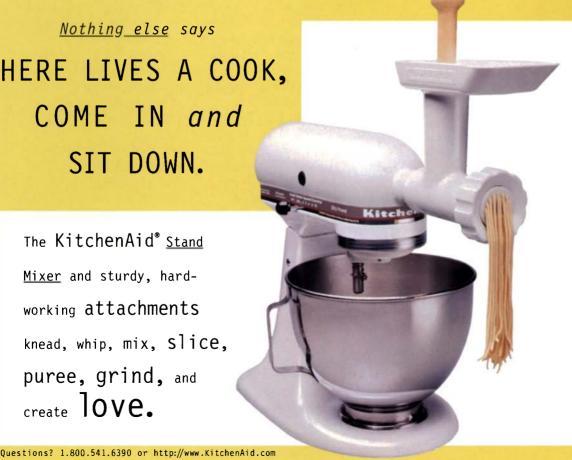
Keep brown sugar soft with apple peel

To prevent brown sugar from getting hard or lumpy, put a few pieces of apple peel in with the sugar in its container. Replace the peel when it dries out.

> —Petronella F. Gorton. Boulder, CO •

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What's New in Kitchen Sinks for Active Cooks

As a kitchen designer, I come across loads of snazzy kitchen-sink materials, colors, and options. But I'm also a cook-and I've got some definite opinions about the sinks that work best. Your kitchen sink is a tool you'll use more than any other, for everything from scrubbing pots and pans to rinsing greens --even washing the dog. So if you're shopping for a new sink, concentrate on function and convenience—and imagine how you might work more efficiently in your kitchen with a sink of the right size, shape, material, and location.

SINKS NEED TO BE ROOMY

Whether it's to be a single sink or a double, the size and shape of the big bowl are what's critical. "Big enough to do the roasting pan," you'll say, and the familiar unit—rectangular with a faucet centered behind, about 21 inches wide by

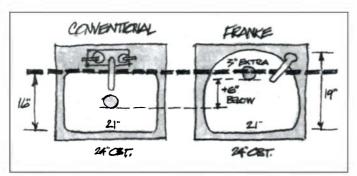
16 inches front to back and 7 inches deep—suffices... nearly. But there's been a remarkable design breakthrough that you may not know about.

Franke, a Swiss company, has arced its bowl back and put the faucet in a corner, creating a full 3 inches more sink using exactly the same depth of counter. Further, Franke pushed its drain hole back toward the wall to give us 6 inches of lovely new cabinet space down in front of the plumbing: room to store all the cleaning paraphernalia and nameless stuff that won't now fit (see illustration below).

This is the generous shape I think a big sink ought to have (other manufacturers now produce similar configurations). In it, your roasting pan will scrub up happily forevermore.

AVOID A DOUBLE SINK THAT'S CRAMPED

With the big sink under con-



A breakthrough in sink design. With the faucet in the corner, the bowl curved, and the drain hole pushed back, there's more room in the sink and more cabinet space below. Franke came up with the design, though other companies now make this style, too.



You spend a lot of kitchen time at the sink. It's worth finding one that's at least 19 inches front to back, 21 inches side to side, and 7 inches deep.

trol, think about an associate bowl. Avoid two same-sized units: each will likely be too small. And don't let a smaller bowl get too narrow to use. Twelve to 14 inches square will let you scrub a 10-inch skillet or wash 5 pounds of potatoes. A proper stainless double sink will fit nicely over a 36-inch cabinet, and a single needs just 24 inches if your installer cuts out the tops of the cabinet sides underneath. Thicker porcelain or Corian will take up 3 to 6 inches more counter.

Unless you have a luxuriously long counter, set aside any notion of a triple sink. You'd need at least five feet of precious countertop or everything would be cramped.

THINK ABOUT A SATELLITE SINK

I understand why the double sink has become an article of faith. The sink is where we do everything wet. It's the busiest junction in the kitchen.

But consider positioning the smaller bowl a few feet away, to a preparation space by the cooktop for vegetable washing, pot filling, and garbage disposal. With a satellite sink, congestion is relieved, and the main sink can be devoted to washing up. You'll still have two sinks, but they'll no longer be Siamese twins. Two cooks will be able to work at once without locking hips, children can fill glasses without careening into you, and you can arrange flowers while someone else wrestles with dishes across the way.

"But the cost," you'll say. Plumbing another sink can be expensive, yes, but trade this off against the convenience you'll enjoy every day for years.

STAINLESS IS PRACTICAL, AND THE CHOICE OF PROS

And it's perhaps your most practical choice at home. Yes, stainless steel bonks when you thump it, but it's less likely to snap the stems off wineglasses, multiple scratches quickly blend to become patina, and marks rub out with an abrasive cleanser. Look for a brushed finish to hide blemishes, undercoating to dampen sound, and 18-gauge steel for sturdiness. If you hear comments of "too institutional," don't listen. We're talking tools, not props. But there are other

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26 FINE COOKING



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Black Soy Bean Hummus

1 clove garlic, minced

1-15oz. can EDEN Organic Black Soy Beans

2 tablespoons red onion, minced

2-3 tablespoons lemon juice, freshly squeezed

1¹/₂ tablespoons sesame tahini

2 teaspoons fresh cilantro, chopped

1/2 teaspoon cumin

1 teaspoon EDEN Ume Plum Vinegar 1/8/1/4 teaspoon cayenne, optional 1 tablespoon EDEN Olive Oil, optional 3 green onions, garnish, chopped

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Undermounting means a sleeker look. The sink's edge doesn't hump over the counter so cleanup is easier.

materials to choose from if you don't fancy stainless.

SINKS COME IN OTHER STURDY MATERIALS

All these sink materials wear and clean up about the same.

Enameled cast iron (usually called porcelain) comes in many colors besides white, and nowadays doesn't stain or chip easily. Kohler and American Standard produce versions of the Franke expanded shape, but the heavy, thickwalled cast-iron construction shrinks bowl size and makes undermounting difficult. Cost is generally less than similar stainless units, but colors boost prices by 20% or more.

Composite means quartz or granite particles suspended in hard, thin plastic. Sizes and configurations are the same as

† includes installation

many high-end stainless models, but they only come in a few colors and white. Composite sinks are more expensive, but they're fine if you want a nonmetallic look and feel.

Solid-surface sinks (made by Corian and others) come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors, to be undermounted seamlessly. The look is impressively tailored and clean, and the material is durable. But because the walls are thick, the largest bowls may still be a bit small.

Soapstone, aproned porcelain, fireclay, and other exotics cost a lot and offer little extra beyond stylish looks.

UNDERMOUNT FOR A SLEEKER LOOK

Undermounted sinks are cemented flush beneath a

smooth-finished hole in a stone or Corian-type counter. With no shiny wide collar around the sink perimeter, the only steel you see is in the basin. The fact that there's no top edge where goop can collect—and the convenience of being able to hand-sweep puddles of water back into the sink without obstruction—will help ease the trauma of the high cost of solid-surface or stone countertops.

HAND-PICK THE EXTRAS

Some custom features are quite useful, while others create clutter.

Disposals are handy when you're scraping plates and where you generate debris from food preparation. They fit fine in small sinks, too, and they're inexpensive enough that you might consider having two. Some municipal codes and septic systems don't allow disposal output, so ask your plumber.

Drainboards come with some sinks, but their ridged and runneled surfaces are awkward for other purposes. And because space-age caulk waterproofs the joint between the countertop and the backsplash, you may decide that

A satellite sink can reinvent your kitchen

Use a second sink to accommodate the cook, and to divert family traffic away from where you work. Here are some possibilities:

- ◆ A preparation sink is good near the cooktop or a large working space. Consider a 15-inch round or comparably sized rectangle, about 7 inches deep.
- ◆ Kids may need a sink clear of your main work space, near a microwave and in reach of refrigerator, glasses, and pantry.
- ◆ A second cook needs a sink adjoining a second work counter so that both of you have only to share the cooktop and the refrigerator and won't collide in between. A 15-inch round is good here, too.
- ◆ A breakfast area sink, near the coffeemaker, toaster oven, and maybe an undercounter fridge, saves you extra steps and keeps interlopers out of the cook's way.

you don't need a drainboard after all.

Dish drainers, colanders, and cutting boards that nestle into or over sinks are small and apt to add clutter. Buy them later if you still want them.

Look for sinks at discount appliance stores, plumbing showrooms, and home centers. Shop for price as well as for looks and performance, and hand the final list to the plumber, builder, or kitchen designer. They should be good for unbiased advice—and possibly for better prices.

Rob Morris is a cook and kitchen designer. His design firm, Robert Morris Associates, is in Darien, Connecticut. ◆

Editors' note: There's a lot to say about faucets, too, and we'll cover them in a future issue.

A sampling of sinks

There are many sink manufacturers and countless sinks in an endless variety of shapes, sizes, and configurations. Here are selected offerings by four of the leaders. Prices include drain assembly but not installation.

Manufacturer/material/ telephone	25-inch single bowl	33- to 36-inch double bowl	36 to 39-inch double bowl	15- to 16-inch single bowl (satellite)
Franke 18-gauge stainless 800/626-5771	\$450 to \$500	\$700 to \$750	\$800 to \$850	\$250 to \$300
Elkay 18-gauge stainless 630/574-8484 (ask for customer service)	\$285 to \$465	\$400 to \$730	\$440 to \$810	\$200 to \$400
Kohler enameled cast iron* 800/4-KOHLER	\$290 to \$350	\$290 to \$400	\$480 to \$540	about \$200
Corian solid surfacing† 800/4-CORIAN	\$625 to \$800	\$800 to \$1150	\$900 to \$1150 (48-inch)	\$530 to \$665 (17½-inch)

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If the neighbors seem to have their noses in the air, there's probably pork on the grill. Because whether it's smoked, sauced, or marinated, it's in to eat out with The Other White Meat*. For recipes, send a self-addressed, stamped. business-size envelope to: Recipes Ad, Box 10383, Des Moines, IA 50306. Or visit our Web site at http://www.nppc.org/



Improve the air QUALITY in your neighborhood.



BLACK PEPPER CHOPS WITH MOLASSES BUTTER

4 America's Cut™ (1 1⁄2-inch thick boneless center loin chops)

1/4 cup butter, softened

1 T. molasses • Salt, to taste

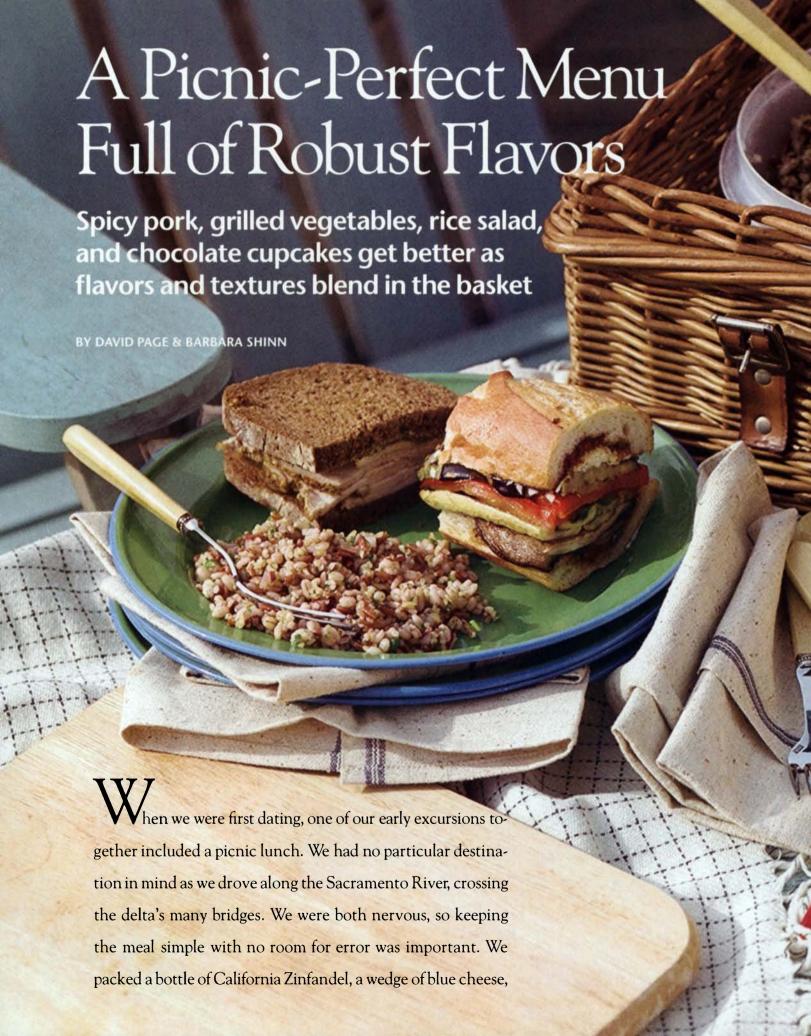
1/2 t. freshly squeezed lemon juice

4 T. coarsely ground black pepper

Stir together butter, molasses and lemon juice with a fork. Cover and refrigerate. Rub chops on both sides evenly with pepper. Grill chops over medium hot coals for 12-15 minutes, turning once.

Top each chop with molasses butter. Serves 4.

TASTE WHAT'S NEXT PORK
The Other White Meat.









Homemade condiments make these sandwiches special. The Apple Butter and the Sun-Dried Tomato & Olive Spread can be made well in advance and used to add flavor to other dishes.

and some crusty bread. Along the way, we picked Black Mission figs from a tree that David knew about. Our supplies consisted of a pocketknife and a blanket. We drank wine from the bottle and stuffed pieces of the blue cheese into the sunwarmed figs.

Today we're married (the picnic was a success), and we own two restaurants in New York City, which keep us pretty busy, but somehow we still find time to go on picnics. We try to keep things simple, no longer from nerves, but from a desire to spend more time enjoying the scenery—and the company.

HOW TO MAKE SANDWICHES THAT TASTE GREAT AND TRAVEL WELL

When we leave our house on the north fork of Long Island, usually on bikes, we often don't plan on when and where we'll stop for lunch. But once we've chosen a spot, the only work we want to do is

to unfurl the blanket and open a bottle of wine. Of course, we want good food, too. For us, the best picnic menu features delicious food that doesn't need any fussy last-minute work.

With this in mind, we chose a couple of sandwiches as the cornerstones of our picnic menu: one featuring

spice-crusted roasted pork loin on slices of pumpernickel spread with apple butter and coarse-grain mustard; the other, layers of colorful grilled vegetables packed between crusty Italian bread with a tangy olive and sun-dried tomato spread.



"Every time we go on a picnic, we're reminded of our first date," say authors David Page and Barbara Shinn.

What makes these sandwiches so picnic-perfect is that they actually get better after they sit around for a while. The individual flavors blend so that, by the time you reach your picnic destination, the sandwich tastes even better than when you first made it. This is especially true for the grilled vegetable sand-

wich. The olive and sun-dried tomato spread marinates the vegetables and the bread, permeating the sandwich with a tangy, robust flavor.

Because nothing's worse than reaching into your picnic basket and pulling out a soggy sandwich, we kept the following guidelines in mind as we made our sandwiches.

- Avoid very wet ingredients, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, oil, and vinegar; they'll make your bread soggy.
- Remember that some ingredients quickly fade. Bacon, for example, becomes soggy and greasy over

and sun-dried tomato spread. Bacon, for example, becomes soggy and greasy over

The sandwiches for the

picnic taste best after

their flavors have had

time to get acquainted.

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time. And greens often wilt before you eat your sandwich.

- ◆ Choose foods that aren't too perishable. Fish, mayonnaise, and eggs can spoil quickly in warm weather.
- Use sturdy bread. Bread that has a hearty texture, a thick crust, or both will stand up to moist spreads and fillings better than finely textured bread.

A RICE SALAD AND CUPCAKES ADD MORE FLAVOR AND A LITTLE FUN TO THE MENU

To go with the sandwiches, we've created a salad that features three different grains, two of which are conveniently cooked together, while the third gets just a quick soak. The nuttiness, texture, and flavor of the rice, barley, and bulgur complement both



Once the vegetables are grilled, it's quick work to make the sandwich—just stack 'em up. The spread goes on both sides of the sandwich for the most impact.

sandwiches. The sturdiness of the grains allows you to dress the salad in advance without worrying that it will become mushy. And the addition of a lot of fresh herbs makes it taste fresh and summery.

Cupcakes are a fun and practical dessert for a picnic because they don't need to be spooned, cut, or sliced for serving. These rich dark-chocolate ones taste better hours and even a day after they're made: the sour cream in the batter keeps them moist.

To drink, we'll pack a bottle of wine from one of our local wineries, or buy some on the way to the picnic site. A Riesling—the grape is grown on the north fork of Long Island—goes wonderfully well with the flavors on this menu, particularly with the cumin flavor of the pork's spice rub.

PACKING UP YOUR PICNIC

We sometimes use a backpack designed specifically for picnicking, with a compartment for utensils, glassware, and napkins. It has a separate insulated compartment to pack our food and a sleeve to hold a bottle of wine. A regular backpack, packed carefully, would also work. For traditionalists, nothing beats the pleasing look and lightweight rigidity of a wicker basket. The recipes that follow make enough food for eight people; if you make all of it, you might want to use a backpack and a basket.

Whatever you use to haul your picnic, be sure that the food is well wrapped to keep it tasting fresh. We wrap the sandwiches in plastic. A wicker basket usually keeps the sandwiches from getting squashed en route, but if we're packing them in a more flexible pack, we put them in hard plastic containers. One option for packing the dessert is to put the cupcakes



Layers of tender grilled vegetables and tender roasted pork. Tightly wrapping each sandwich in plastic not only keeps it fresh but also compacts the layers so the sandwich is more manageable to eat.

and frosting in separate containers, and then frost the cupcakes at the picnic site. Although this goes against our rule of no last-minute preparations, this way you can keep piling on the delicious dark chocolate frosting as you eat your cupcake.

If you eat your picnic within a couple of hours of packing it, you won't have to worry about refrigeration. If it's going to be much longer than that before you eat, consider packing the food in a cooler.

Finally, don't forget to bring a few basic tools along: a pocketknife—with a corkscrew, if wine is on the menu—a blanket, some knives, forks, glasses, and plates (plastic and paper or silver and china, depending on your tastes and mode of transportation). Premoistened towels are great for washing your hands before and after eating. A spare plastic bag for garbage also makes sense, especially if you've ventured off the beaten path—which is, after all, part of the fun of going on a picnic in the first place.

Grilled Vegetable Sandwiches

These are great make-ahead sandwiches. At the restaurant, we usually make them on Saturdays, but our staff likes to wait until Monday to eat them. *Yields 4 sandwiches*.

2 medium zucchini, sliced lengthwise ¼ inch thick 2 medium yellow squash, sliced lengthwise ¼ inch thick 1 medium eggplant, sliced lengthwise ¼ inch thick 4 scallions, trimmed

4 medium portabella mushrooms, wiped clean, stems removed $\frac{1}{3}$ cup olive oil for brushing on the vegetables Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste 2 red peppers, roasted, peeled, and quartered $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Sun-Dried Tomato & Olive Spread (see recipe below) Four 6-inch lengths crusty French or Italian bread, sliced

1 cup grated Asiago, dry Sonoma Jack, Provolone, or other sharp, dry cheese

Brush the zucchini, squash, eggplant, scallions, and mushrooms lightly with olive oil and sprinkle with a little salt and pepper. Grill or broil until tender. Cut the grilled mushrooms into thin slices.

If the bread is very thick, hollow it out slightly to make a pocket. Spread the Sun-Dried Tomato & Olive Spread liberally on each slice. Layer the vegetables, including the roasted peppers, on one half of the bread, dividing them evenly among the four sandwiches. Pat the grated cheese on the other half and put the halves together.

Sun-Dried Tomato & Olive Spread

You can find black-olive paste (labeled tapenade) in most supermarkets and in specialty food stores. *Yields* $\frac{3}{4}$ cup.

3 cloves garlic

1/2 cup coarsely chopped sun-dried tomatoes (reconstituted in water and drained before chopping, if necessary)

3 Tbs. black-olive paste ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil 2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar

1 scallion, minced

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste



In a food processor, mince the garlic. Add the tomatoes and olive paste and purée. Add the olive oil and vinegar and pulse to incorporate. Add the scallion, salt, and pepper; pulse until just combined. The spread will keep, covered and refrigerated, for a couple of weeks.

Pork Loin Sandwich with Mustard & Apple Butter

Use a coffee grinder dedicated to spices or a mortar and pestle to grind your whole spices. The coarse grind gives the pork a wonderfully textured crust and won't burn the way a finely ground rub might. Roast the pork loin at night when the kitchen is cooler. *Yields 4 sandwiches*.

1 Tbs. coarsely ground cumin seeds
1 Tbs. coarsely ground mustard seeds
1 Tbs. coarsely ground coriander seeds
2 lb. boneless pork loin, tied
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
3 Tbs. olive oil
8 slices hearty pumpernickel or other dark bread
About ½ cup Apple Butter (see recipe at right)

About 1/4 cup coarse-grain mustard

Heat the oven to 350°F. Combine the cumin, mustard, and coriander. With your hands, pat the spices all over the pork loin. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil in an ovenproof, heavy-based pan over mediumhigh heat. When the oil is hot, add the pork and sear it on all sides. Put the pan in the oven and roast the loin until a meat thermometer registers 145°F, 40 to 50 min. (The pork will continue to cook out of the oven.) Let cool.

Cut the cooled pork loin into thin slices. For each sandwich, spread a generous amount of Apple Butter on one slice of the bread; spread the mustard on the other. Pile the slices of pork on one side and top with the other.

sandwiches with a half of each. The nutty flavor of the grain salad goes well with the tangy vegetable sandwich and the roasted pork.

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Apple Butter

We often make a double batch of this apple butter and can it. Without canning, it should be stored in the refrigerator, where it will last a few weeks. *Yields about 3 cups*.

4½ lb. McIntosh or Rome apples, peeled, cored, and chopped (about 12 cups)

2 Tbs. lemon juice

3/4 tsp. salt

1¼ cups sugar

1½ tsp. apple-cider vinegar (with 5% acidity, if canning) ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

In a large, heavy-based saucepan, combine the apples, lemon juice, and salt. Boil, stirring often, until the fruit softens to a mash, about 30 min. Add the sugar, vinegar, and cinnamon. Reduce the heat to medium low and cook, stirring often and scraping the bottom of the pan, until the fruit reduces to a thick purée, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Wehani Rice & Barley Salad

If you can't find Wehani rice, double the amount of barley; the salad won't be as colorful, but it will still taste great. *Yields 8 cups*.

1 Tbs. olive oil

1 bay leaf

1 cup Lundberg's Wehani rice (available in some supermarkets and specialty food stores; call 916/882-4551 for sources)

1 cup pearl barley

1 tsp. salt



Glossy, thick chocolate frosting gets spread on a chocolate cupcake at the picnic site. Pack the cupcakes and frosting separately to keep things neat en route.

²/₃ cup coarsely ground cracked bulgur wheat

²/₃ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1/4 cup red-wine vinegar

²/₃ cup chopped red onion

1/4 cup chopped parsley, or a mixture of parsley and any or all of the following: basil, rosemary, and thyme

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 cup thinly sliced scallions

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a large, heavy-based saucepan, heat the 1 Tbs. olive oil over medium heat. Add the bay leaf, rice, and barley and toast lightly, stirring, about 3 min. Add 4 cups water and ½ tsp. of the salt. Cover and simmer until the rice has begun to burst and the barley is somewhat soft and doubled in size, 40 to 50 min. Drain any excess water and spread the grains on a baking sheet to cool. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, bring ¾ cup water and the remaining ½ tsp. salt to a rolling boil. Pour over the bulgur and let stand 15 min. Fluff the bulgur and spread on a baking sheet to cool.

In a large bowl, combine the rice and barley with the bulgur. Add the extra-virgin olive oil, vinegar, onion, herbs, garlic, scallions, salt, and pepper. Toss well.

Chocolate Cupcakes with Dark Chocolate Frosting

These cupcakes become even more moist and fudgy the day after you make them. *Yields 16 cupcakes*.

FOR THE FROSTING: 4 oz. unsweetened chocolate 3/4 cup evaporated milk 1 cup sugar Pinch salt

FOR THE CUPCAKES:
4 oz. unsweetened chocolate
6 oz. (1½ cups) flour
¾ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
2 cups sugar
1 cup strong, hot coffee
½ cup sour cream
½ cup vegetable oil
2 eggs

For the frosting—In a double boiler, melt the chocolate carefully. In a blender, blend the evaporated milk, sugar, and salt until the sugar is dissolved. Add the chocolate and blend until the mixture is thick and glossy, about 3 min. Store at room temperature, covered with plastic, until ready to use. It will keep for up to two days.

For the cupcakes—Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease muffin tins. Melt the chocolate carefully in a double boiler; set aside to cool. Sift the flour, baking soda, salt, and sugar into a medium bowl. In a large bowl, whisk together the coffee, sour cream, oil, and eggs; whisk in the chocolate. Add the dry ingredients, whisking until there are no lumps. Pour the batter into the prepared muffin tins, dividing it evenly to make 16 cupcakes. Bake on the middle rack until a toothpick inserted into the middle of a cupcake comes out clean, 19 to 20 min. Cool the cupcakes for 15 min. in the pan; then remove them from the pan and cool them further. Ice generously with frosting, or pack the frosting separately.

David Page and Barbara Shinn own Home Restaurant and Drovers Tap Room in New York City. They're at work on a book about pickling and preserving.



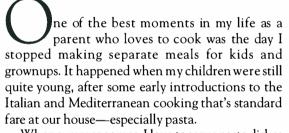
Mix summer-fresh ingredients and tasty condiments with just-boiled pasta for light fare with big flavor

BY CLIFFORD WRIGHT





No-cook sauces depend on the juiciest, most flavorful tomatoes. Drain the tomatoes so the sauce has less water and more fresh tomato flavor.



When summer comes, I love to serve pasta dishes with raw sauces; the Italians call them pasta con salsa a crudo. With raw sauces, there's no cooking beyond boiling the pasta—the only heat applied to the sauce is the gentle warmth from the cooked pasta. My kids love these dishes, and they're fantastically fast and easy. I keep my pantry well stocked with high-quality condiments, I see what looks good at the market, and I've got dinner at a moment's notice.

GOOD-QUALITY FIXINGS, FINELY CHOPPED

There are a few tricks to Italian raw sauces that will ensure great-tasting results.

Choose high-quality ingredients. This doesn't mean expensive; it just means that you should pay as much attention to your shopping trip as to what goes on in the kitchen. Since there's no cooking involved with these sauces, the ingredients stand on their own feet, original and pure.



Playful color and zesty taste. Green and black olives spice up Fettuccine with Tomatoes, Capers & Olives.



Consider color when adding ingredients. Add darker-colored briny olives and capers last for the final toss so the summer tomatoes keep their bright color.

There's no strict science, but raw sauces do rely on a few principles.

- ◆ Use olive oil to flavor the sauce. It takes on the flavors of the sauce ingredients, binds them together, and has a flavor all its own. A good-quality extravirgin olive oil that you'll find in the supermarket is best. Estate-bottled olive oils are wonderfully distinctive, but they'll overpower a raw pasta sauce.
- Add a wet ingredient, like tomatoes, and a green one or a crunchy one to go with it.

◆ Finely chop the ingredients to keep them small. That way, they'll be evenly warmed by the gentle heat of the pasta and evenly dispersed throughout the dish. They should be close to room temperature so they don't cool the pasta as you mix everything.

These recipes will give good guidelines and proportions for concocting your own preparations. You'll learn through experience, but a good rule to follow when you begin exploring past the recipes here is that simplicity is a good thing.

DRY PASTA HOLDS HEAT BETTER THAN FRESH

Look for dried pasta labeled "durum semolina" or "durum wheat." I like to use this type of hard-wheat pasta because it's good and chewy and holds heat longer than fresh pasta. De Cecco, Barilla, del Verde, and Ronzoni are all good—you don't need to buy expensive gourmet pasta. And durum semolina pasta is typical of southern Italy, where these raw sauce recipes find their roots.

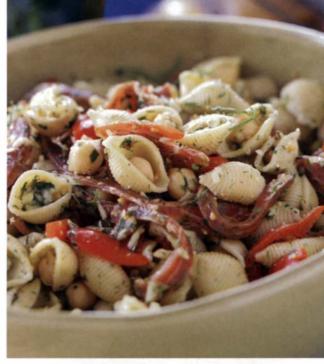
Use pasta shapes that hold the ingredients. Rawsauces aren't smooth like cooked sauces, so the pastas that match them best are those with hollow areas to trap the ingredients, such as shells, cavatelli,

A well-stocked pantry lets you make dinner at a moment's notice

You'll always be able to whip up easy, fast pastas if you keep ingredients like these on hand:

- ♦ extra-virgin olive oil
- ♦ Parmesan cheese
- ◆ prosciutto
- ♦ capers
- ♦ black and green olives
- anchovies
- ♦ dried chiles
- **♦** sardines
- ♦ canned tuna
- pine nuts
- **♦** almonds
- ♦ oregano
- ♦ thyme
- ♦ fennel seeds
- sun-dried tomatoes
- dried pasta of various shapes and sizes





Shells help catch the bits of sauce, so each bite includes the flavors of the chickpeas, fennel, tomatoes and prosciutto.

orecchiette, penne, or rigatoni. Use flat pastas like fettuccine to soak up juicier sauces.

To cook one pound of pasta, use five quarts of abundantly salted, vigorously boiling water. Never put oil in the water; oil and water separate, and this does nothing for the pasta.

Tasting the pasta is the only way to tell if it's done. It should be cooked *al dente*, "to the tooth." It shouldn't melt in your mouth (that's too soft), nor should you have to bite down (too hard). You should feel the texture of the pasta with a little nip of the teeth, with no chalky center.

CHEESE IS OPTIONAL

Raw sauces should be full-flavored but light-tasting, so use cheese sparingly, if at all. Have some good-quality cheeses on hand, such as imported parmigiano-reggiano, pecorino, and ricotta salata, and let your guests decide if they want to add it. You might find that these summery-tasting pastas don't need it.

Fettuccine with Tomatoes, Capers & Olives

This recipe depends on juicy, flavorful tomatoes. Big, fruity, green Cerignola olives are less briny than other green olives and make a delicious difference. Serves four:

 $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 lb. fettuccine

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

8 imported black olives, pitted and coarsely chopped 8 imported green olives, pitted and coarsely chopped

2 Tbs. capers, rinsed; chopped if large

3 Tbs. chopped flat-leaf parsley

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Toss the tomatoes and garlic together and drain them in a strainer while you continue with the recipe. Bring a

large pot of well-salted water to a boil and cook the fettuccine until al dente. Drain it well, return it to the pot, and toss it with the tomato mixture. Toss again with the olive oil, olives, capers, parsley, salt, and pepper. Let sit for 3 to 5 min. to absorb the flavors before serving.

Pasta Shells with Chickpeas, Fennel, **Tomatoes & Prosciutto**

Prosciutto can be salty, so taste it before you add the entire amount. I find that good-quality canned chickpeas work just fine in this recipe. Serves four.

4 salt-packed anchovies, boned and rinsed (or 8 oil-cured anchovies)

16 large basil leaves, washed and thoroughly dried

4 large cloves garlic

5 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

1 lb. medium-sized ribbed pasta shells

1½ cups cooked, drained chickpeas

1 small bulb fennel, trimmed and coarsely chopped (about 2 cups)

12 cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters or eighths, depending on size

1/4 lb. sliced prosciutto, cut into wide strips

Freshly ground black pepper to taste ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Finely chop the anchovies, basil, and garlic and transfer to a small mixing bowl. Whisk in the olive oil and set aside. Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil and cook the shells. When the pasta is almost al dente, add the chickpeas to warm them. As soon as the pasta is al dente, drain it and the chickpeas well. Pour the olive-oil mixture into the pot, add the pasta and chickpeas, and toss thoroughly with the fennel, tomatoes, and prosciutto. Season with pepper and let the pasta rest for 3 to 5 min., loosely covered. Toss with the grated Parmesan, if you like, and serve.

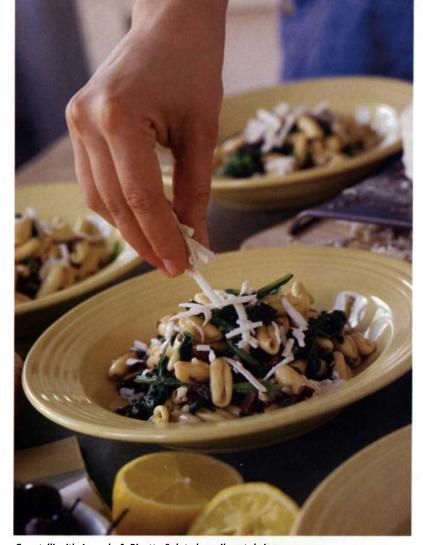
Cavatelli with Arugula & Ricotta Salata

Ricotta salata is a smooth, firm sheep's milk cheese that's lightly salted. If you can't find it, use feta cheese and soak it for an hour in cold water before you use it. Serves four.

5 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil 3/4 cup chopped imported black olives, such as Gaeta or kalamata 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice; more to taste 3 large cloves garlic, finely chopped 4½ tsp. fresh thyme Freshly ground black pepper to taste 1/4 tsp. cayenne; more to taste 1 lb. cavatelli 1 large bunch grugula (about 8 oz.), rinsed. dried well, and coarsely chopped 1 cup (about 7 oz.) grated ricotta salata or feta

In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, olives, lemon juice, garlic, thyme, black pepper, and cayenne and set aside. Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil and cook the cavatelli until al dente. Drain it well and return it to the pan. Add the arugula and the olive-oil mixture, folding gently until the ingredients are combined. Let sit until the arugula has wilted, about 3 min. Sprinkle with the ricotta salata just before serving.

Clifford Wright is a writer and cook. He's at work on a book about easy, family-style Italian cooking that will be published by William Morrow next year. •



Cavatelli with Arugula & Ricotta Salata has vibrant, brinygreen flavors. It works as a main or side dish; the author likes to follow it with grilled lamb.



Wine Choices

Serve light, simple Italian wines with spontaneous summer pastas

These uncooked pasta sauces—full of lively color, texture, and flavor-—define summertime ease. Don't complicate things with complex wines: keep it simple. Depending on your mood of the moment, you have plenty of options.

Dry, refreshing white wines are ideal, and Italy produces several appealing candidates. Look for a light Gavi, such as Michele Chiarlo, or a Soave from Masi. For a bit more body, try Galestro from Antinori, or Ruffino's Libaio, a blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio.

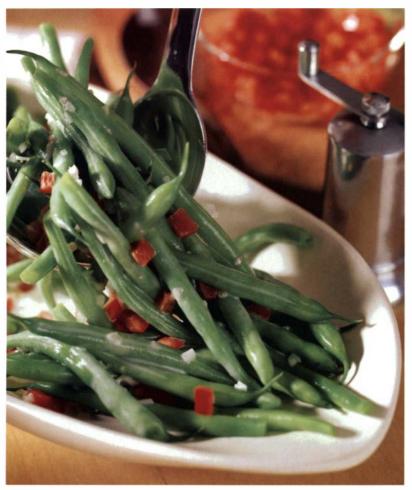
For an extra-festive treat, search out Prosecco, a light sparkler from near

Venice. The salty ingredients in all three recipes will jump-start the bubbles.

If you'd rather have red, just steer clear of big, tannic powerhouses. Match the style of the food with something casual, easy drinking, and light to medium bodied. A Ca'Viola Dolcetto d'Alba or a Vietti Barbera d'Alba from the northern province of the Piedmont, or either the Remole Chianti or Sangiovese di Toscana from Frescobaldi in Tuscany will provide a fine balance of flavors at a reasonable price.

Rosina Tinari Wilson teaches and writes about wine and food in the San Francisco Bay area.

JUNE/JULY 1997 39



Brighten plain-Jane beans with a sunny lemon vinaigrette. The author's favorite way to serve garden-fresh green beans also works great with asparagus.



Take a summery approach to steamed potatoes. A creamy basil dressing adds color and flavor to tender potatoes.

Vibrant Vinaigrettes for Quickly Cooked Vegetables

Hot from the pan, green beans, snap peas, and new potatoes absorb the full flavors of warm, tangy dressings

BY ABIGAIL JOHNSON DODGE





Make a minty vinaigrette right in the skillet. Sauté snap peas and cucumbers in oil and finish with a splash of vinegar and a showering of chopped mint.

o my mother's credit, there was always a fresh vegetable on our dinner table when I was growing up. Her vegetables were always perfectly cooked—and always perfectly plain.

At the beginning of summer, when locally grown bright-green sugar snap peas, firm little zucchini, and tender red new potatoes start to show up in the markets, I actually appreciate my mom's simple approach to vegetables. I cook these first vegetables of the season unadorned to savor their fresh, pure flavor. But as summer continues, I get bored with plain.

When this happens, I turn to vinaigrettes. Though usually associated with green salads, vinaigrettes are wonderful paired with steamed or sautéed summer vegetables. In a cold salad, the vegetables and vinaigrette remain separate, but cooked vegetables absorb a vinaigrette, which punches up their flavor. The flavors of the vinaigrette, in turn, are intensified when warmed.

A lemon vinaigrette, for example, brightens steamed green beans, while a minty vinaigrette

freshens up cucumbers and snap peas. A creamy basil vinaigrette makes potatoes taste summery, while a vinaigrette made with balsamic vinegar deepens the flavor of a quickly cooked ratatouille.

FLAVORED VINAIGRETTES PACK A PUNCH

In its simplest form, a vinaigrette is a combination of oil and vinegar (or other acid), usually at a 3:1 ratio. In the classic preparation, the oil is slowly whisked into the acid to form a temporary emulsion. In some dishes, where it's important for the emulsion to last longer, an emulsifier—an herb, a spice, or mustard—is added to the vinaigrette. Aside from creating a more stable emulsion, these additions also add flavor.

Mixing and matching flavors is part of the fun of making vinaigrette. Tweaking this classic combination—choosing from among a variety of oils and vinegars and adding garlic, shallots, herbs, spices, mustard, or mayonnaise—means you can make the flavor of the vinaigrette as straightforward or as complex as you like.

When I think about making a vinaigrette for my summer vegetables, I put the flavor of the vegetable first. The acid, whether vinegar or citrus juice, should be strong enough to bring out the vegetable's flavor without overwhelming it. A light vinegar, such as rice or white wine, will jazz up delicate cucumbers, fresh

peas, or summer squash without overpowering them. More robust eggplant, tomatoes, and portabella mushrooms can stand up to a red-wine or balsamic vinegar.

The same concerns apply to oil. The strong, distinct flavor of extra-virgin olive oil is best suited to heartier vegetables and vinegars. Use the same matching principles with additional seasonings, such as mustard, garlic, and herbs. Team stronger flavors with hearty vegetables, and save delicate flavorings for milder produce.

Use fresh herbs for summertime vinaigrettes. While dried herbs have their place in cooking, it isn't with summer vegetables. If you can't find an herb that's suggested in one of these recipes, don't reach for the dried version of it. Instead, substitute a different fresh herb, tarragon in place of mint in the sugar snap pea vinaigrette, for example, or parsley in place of basil in the potato

recipe. The flavor will be different, but it will still be fresh and delicious.

SOME VINAIGRETTES ARE MADE RIGHT IN THE SKILLET OR SAUCEPAN

Most vinaigrettes are made by combining all the ingredients except the oil and then whisking in the oil in a slow, steady stream. You can also combine all the ingredients in a lidded bowl or jar and shake to combine, or mix it all in a food processor, adding the oil in a stream at the end. Two of the recipes here follow those basic directions. In the other two, I've separated the oil and vinegar components of the dressing. The vegetables are cooked in the oil and are then tossed with the vinegar off the heat. With this method, the flavors of the vinaigrette are even more fully incorporated into the cooked dish.

Steamed Green Beans with Lemon Vinaigrette

Use any leftover vinaigrette as a salad dressing or as a marinade for grilled chicken. Serves four; yields $\frac{3}{4}$ cup vinaigrette.

11/4 lb. green beans, trimmed and rinsed 3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice 2 Tbs. mayonnaise or heavy cream 1 Tbs. minced shallots 3/4 tsp. salt Freshly ground black pepper to taste 1/2 cup canola oil 1/4 cup chopped red bell pepper

Steam the green beans until tender, about 5 min. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the lemon juice, mayonnaise, shallots, salt, and pepper. Add the oil in a slow stream, whisking constantly until the vinaigrette is well blended. Toss the cooked beans with the red pepper and enough vinaigrette to coat, about ½ cup. Serve warm, with extra vinaigrette on the side, if you like.



Oil can do double-duty. It's part of the vinaigrette, and it's also used to sauté the vegetables.



Yellow bell pepper and scallions give ratatouille color. Eggplant, zucchini, and tomatoes get added to the pan in succession.



Warm Potatoes with Basil Vinaigrette

Though this dressing can be whisked by hand, I prefer to use a food processor, which mixes it to a wonderful shade of green. Serves four; yields about ³/₄ cup vinaigrette.

13/4 lb. small red potatoes, scrubbed
1/2 cup packed basil leaves
1 small clove garlic
3 Tbs. red-wine vinegar
1 Tbs. Dijon mustard
3/4 tsp. salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
2/3 cup canola oil

Steam the potatoes until tender, about 15 min. In a food processor, combine the basil, garlic, vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper. With the machine running, gradually add the oil until completely incorporated. When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, halve or quarter them, depending on their size. Put them in a serving bowl and drizzle with about ½ cup of the vinaigrette. Serve warm, with extra vinaigrette on the side, if you like.

Quick-Cooking Ratatouille

Sweet balsamic vinegar helps mellow the flavors of the vegetables. *Serves four.*

1/3 cup olive oil

1 yellow bell pepper, cored, seeded, and coarsely chopped

5 scallions, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1 small eggplant, peeled and cut into 3/4-inch chunks

1 medium zucchini, thinly sliced

2 cups cherry tomatoes (about 16), quartered

1 large clove garlic, chopped

1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme leaves

1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar; more to taste

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a large, heavy-based skillet, heat about 2 Tbs. of the olive oil over high heat. Add the bell pepper and scallions and sauté until lightly browned, about 4 min. Add the remaining oil and the eggplant. Reduce the heat to medium high and sauté the eggplant until just barely tender, about 4 min. Add the zucchini. Continue cooking, stirring often, until all the vegetables are tender, about 5 min. Stir in the tomatoes, garlic, and thyme. Cook until the tomatoes are just heated through, about 1 min. Remove from the heat. Sprinkle the vegetables with the balsamic vinegar, salt, and pepper. Serve warm.



Balsamic vinegar completes the vinaigrette. Add it to the pan off the heat.

Sautéed Sugar Snap Peas & Cucumbers in Warm Mint Vinaigrette

Usually served raw for their crispness, cucumbers are wonderful when quickly cooked. In this recipe, the cucumbers absorb much of the dressing, making them even more juicy with lots of flavor. Serves four.

2 Tbs. canola oil

3/4 lb. sugar snap peas, trimmed

2 medium cucumbers, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, and thinly sliced

1 tsp. sugar

1 Tbs. white-wine vinegar

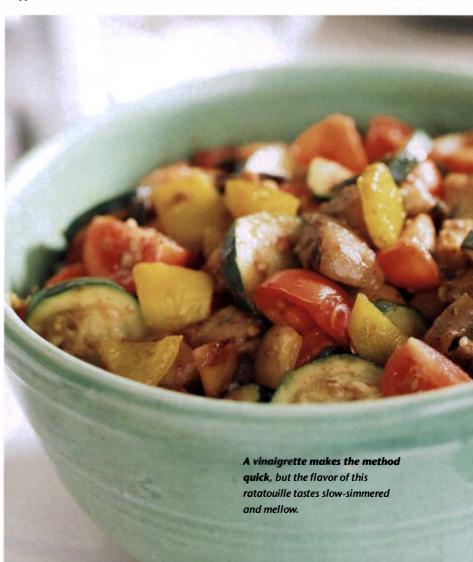
1/4 cup thinly sliced mint leaves

3/4 tsp. salt

Freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a large skillet over high heat, heat the oil. Add the snap peas, lower the heat to medium high, and sauté the peas until barely tender, about 3 min. Add the cucumbers and sugar and continue cooking, stirring often, until the vegetables are tender but haven't lost their color, 3 to 4 min. Remove from the heat and add the vinegar, mint, salt, and pepper. Toss to combine and serve warm.

Abigail Johnson Dodge is a recipe consultant, a food stylist, and Fine Cooking's recipe tester. Her book, Great Fruit Desserts, will be published in June by Rizzoli International. ◆



Tandoori Chicken on the Grill

Make this simple, savory Indian restaurant treat at home with a yogurt-lime marinade and a red-hot grill

BY LEONA PRIYA DALAVAI



Tandoori chicken is succulent, not spicy. Its full flavors come from a yogurt-lime marinade with traditional aromatic spices.



Marinating the chicken lets the flavors soak in.
Let it marinate for at least four but no more than
twelve hours; after that, the chicken can get mushy.

y parents are Indian immigrants, and lucky for me, they passed down their heritage through food. When they threw parties, dozens of rice and curry dishes covered the table. But what the guests always reached for first was tandoori chicken—smoke-kissed and tangy, moist and tender.

I think the reason tandoori was so popular at our family feasts was that few people knew how to make it at home. Tandoori chicken was developed in India, where game hens are cooked in a tandoor, a pit-like red clay oven that can get as hot as 900°F. In America, the only place you'll see a tandoor is at an Indian restaurant. But my dad developed an easy way to make tandoori chicken on our backyard grill, with results that were just as tender and delicious.



The method is simple: soak chicken pieces in a yogurt-based marinade and cook them on the grill, which almost replicates the intense heat of a tandoor.

A YOGURT-LIME MARINADE GIVES TENDER, MOIST CHICKEN

The acidic yogurt in the marinade helps to tenderize the chicken. Yogurt's thickness also helps the tandoori spices cling to the chicken and flavor the meat.

Lime juice adds a distinctive tang, and limes are high in citric acid, also a tenderizer. Choose darker limes; they're more acidic. You can substitute lemon in a pinch, but it's less acidic and doesn't have the same deep flavor.

The tandoori chicken you've seen in Indian restaurants is a distinctive redorange, which comes from flavorless food coloring in the marinade—a reference to the dish's tandoor-pit birthplace. I sometimes add red food coloring for the same effect; you can buy special tandoori coloring at Indian groceries. Omitting the food coloring won't affect the flavor.

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Grilling over red-hot coals is the best way to replicate the intense heat of a tandoor pit. Start testing for doneness after the minimum cooking time and pull the chicken off the grill as soon as it feels firm.

USE MEATY BREASTS AND THIGHS

You can use chicken breasts or thighs, bone-in or boneless. I prefer boneless because they lie flat against the grill and are easier to eat. Remove the skin to let the marinade soak in. Trim the chicken of most of its fat if you want, but do leave a little: it's vital for moistness and flavor.

TANDOORI NEEDS EVEN HEAT

Grilling tandoori isn't hard, but there are some essentials for moist, juicy chicken.

- ◆ Layer the coals evenly to get even, high heat.
- ◆ Close the grill lid to keep in the heat and smoke.
- Be careful not to overcook the chicken. With no skin protecting it, it's more prone to drying out.

Tandoori Chicken

I love serving this with traditional Indian accompaniments, such as sesame-seed chutney, curried potatoes and peas, *raita*,

basmati or fried rice, and mango shakes. If you like spicier chicken, increase the chili powder. *Serves four to six*.

FOR THE MARINADE:

2-inch piece ginger, peeled
4 large cloves garlic
¼ tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. chili powder
1½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. cumin seeds, ground
¾ cup plain low-fat yogurt
1 Tbs. fresh lime juice
A few drops red food coloring or tandoori coloring (optional)

FOR THE CHICKEN:

2 to 3 lb. boneless chicken thighs and breasts 1/4 cup melted butter or olive oil

FOR THE GARNISH:

½ mild onion, thinly sliced ½ cup chopped cilantro leaves 1 or 2 fresh green chiles, thinly sliced 1 lime, cut in wedges

To make the marinade—In a blender or food processor, blend the ginger and garlic to a fine paste (you may need to add a little water to make a paste). Add the turmeric, chili powder, salt, cumin, yogurt, lime juice, and food coloring; process until combined.



Letting the chicken rest briefly before serving makes it juicier. A rest also allows the meat to absorb the flavors of the limes, onions, and cilantro.

To prepare the chicken—Remove the skin from the chicken, leaving some fat. Make a few slits in each piece and transfer to a nonreactive dish large enough for the pieces to lie flat. Pour the marinade over the chicken and stir to coat the chicken thoroughly. Seal with plastic, refrigerate, and marinate for at least 4 to no more than 12 hours, turning the chicken once.

To grill the chicken—Ready a charcoal grill with an even layer of coals. While the grill is heating up, take the chicken out of the refrigerator. When the charcoal is red-hot, lay the chicken pieces on the grill about 2 inches apart. Baste with any remaining marinade. Cover the grill, leaving the vents half-open.

After about 5 min., remove the grill lid and turn over the chicken pieces; they should look slightly charred. Replace the lid and continue cooking for another 5 to 7 min. Uncover the chicken, baste it with the melted butter, turn it over, and leave it uncovered for the rest of the cooking time. Baste after 2 or 3 min. and test for doneness: the meat should feel firm when you press it.

Transfer the chicken to a large platter. Arrange the onion, cilantro, chiles, and lime wedges over the chicken and seal the platter with foil. Let the chicken rest for 10 min. to absorb the garnish flavors.

Leona Dalavai grills tandoori chicken with her family in Bedford, Texas. ◆



Crisp, citrusy green tomatoes are just as tasty in salsas and gratins as they are dipped in cornmeal and fried

BY KAY FAHEY

Fry the first green tomatoes of summer. Slice them thickly, dip them in cornmeal and flour, and sizzle them in olive oil to a crisp, golden finish.





Dice green tomatoes for fresh summer salsas. Their firm texture and tart, almost lemony flavor make them a terrific ingredient for herband chile-spiked salsas, like this one.

with different herbs and spices and cook them in a variety of ways.

MATCH GREEN TOMATOES WITH BOLD FLAVORS

Green tomatoes have an affinity for pungent herbs and spices. Their citrusy flavor makes them a natural match for Asia's ginger and lemongrass, the Mediterranean's basil and garlic, and the Middle East's cinnamon and mint. Not surprisingly, this homegrown American marries especially well with native foods, such as fiery chiles, sweet corn, musky squash, and juicy, ripe red tomatoes.

Slow-roasting and baking concentrate the flavors of green tomatoes. Because green tomatoes are firmer and less juicy than ripe ones, you can treat them much the same way you would any firm vegetable. While you can dice or sliver them to toss into stir-fries, their flavor really develops and blends with other ingredients when baked. Try layering green tomatoes in pies, tarts, or gratins, as in the recipe opposite. You could improvise a green-tomato parmigiano with marinara sauce and fresh cheeses, or fill hollowed-out green tomatoes with a favorite stuffing and bake them.

Green tomatoes make terrific salsas, chutneys, salads, and pickles. If you combine green tomatoes with charred peppers and fragrant herbs, you'll have a delicious salsa (see recipe at right). Cooked with onions and ginger, green tomatoes make delectable chutney. Wedges of green tomatoes alternated with the rich red and gold of ripe tomatoes make a lovely salad, trimmed with paper-thin rings of red onion, and garnished with fresh sprigs of basil or blooming mint. And very simply, you can brush green tomatoes with oil and grill them over hot coals for an easy side dish. If bushels of green tomatoes still remain at your back door at the end of summer, make pickles.

To get you started, here's my favorite recipe for fried green tomatoes, and two others to spur you on to using green tomatoes all summer long.

Green Tomatoes Fried in Olive Oil

This version of the classic calls for frying the tomatoes in olive oil instead of bacon fat. Serves four as a side dish.

2 green tomatoes (about ½ lb. each), sliced ½ inch thick 1 tsp. kosher salt; more to taste ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper ½ cup stone-ground cornmeal ¼ cup all-pur pose flour Olive oil

Season the green tomatoes with the salt and pepper. Combine the cornmeal and flour. Heat a large cast-iron pan over medium heat. When hot, add olive oil to coat (about ½ cup for a 12-inch pan). Dust the tomatoes in the cornmeal mixture just before you put them in the pan. Don't crowd them. Cook the tomatoes, in batches if necessary, until well browned on both sides (3 to 4 min. per side); add more oil if needed. Drain on paper towels and serve warm, sprinkled with extra salt if you like.

Fiery Green Tomato Salsa

Grill or broil the green tomatoes and jalapeños to bring out the flavor in this tasty salsa. Serve with grilled chicken or fish, fajitas, or a bowl of corn tortilla chips. *Yields 2 cups*.

2 green tomatoes (about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. each), sliced $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick 1 medium jalapeño

2 ripe red tomatoes (about 6 oz. each)

½ small onion, chopped

1 Tbs. olive oil

1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

1 Tbs. minced fresh oregano or mint leaves Pinch sugar

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Grill the green tomatoes over hot coals or broil (about 4 min. per side) until seared but not soft; chop them coarsely. Broil or grill the jalapeño until blackened, seal it in a paper bag for 5 min., and let steam. Peel and seed it; mince the flesh. Halve the red tomatoes, squeeze out the juice, and coarsely chop them. Combine all the ingredients, mixing well. Taste and adjust seasonings.



Turn green tomatoes into an easy gratin. Alternate rows of sliced green tomatoes with a mixture of caramelized onions and bacon, top with Parmesan and breadcrumbs, and bake.

Parmesan-Crusted Green Tomato Gratin

1 Tbs. fresh thyme leaves

Slow roasting gives tart-tasting green tomatoes a smooth, mellow flavor. Serves four as a side dish.

¼ lb. bacon, chopped
1 large red onion, thinly sliced
5 Tbs. grated Parmesan cheese
5 Tbs. breadcrumbs
1 Tbs. vegetable oil
4 green tomatoes (about ½ lb. each), sliced ¼ inch thick
⅓ tsp. salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

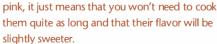
Lightly brown the bacon in a skillet over medium heat, about 4 min. Pour off all but 2 Tbs. of the fat. Add the onion and cook over low heat until caramelized, about 20 min. Meanwhile, combine the Parmesan, breadcrumbs, and oil and set aside.

Heat the oven to 350°F. On one side of a round or oval shallow baking dish, arrange 4 or 5 tomato slices, overlapping them slightly. Spoon some of the bacon-onion mixture on the lower half of each tomato slice, and then lay another row of tomatoes across the first row. Layer the tomatoes at a slight angle against one another, topping each slice with the bacon-onion mixture. Repeat until the dish is full. Sprinkle with the salt, pepper, fresh thyme, and the Parmesan-breadcrumb mixture.

Cover the dish with foil and cook for 30 min. Remove the foil and continue cooking until the tomatoes are very tender and the top of the gratin is browned, about another 30 min.

TO MARKET, TO MARKET: WHERE TO FIND GREEN TOMATOES

You'll find plenty of green tomatoes at your local farmers' market—or from an ambitious neighborhood gardener. And while many grocery stores in the South have always carried green tomatoes, groceries in the rest of the country increasingly feature local produce in the summer, including green tomatoes—or at least underripe ones. If you find green tomatoes with a trace of



Not only can you begin enjoying green tomatoes before the red ones ripen, but they'll also store for weeks in the refrigerator, so you'll have green tomatoes long after the ripe ones are gone. Even when a cool, damp summer means a poor harvest of ripe tomatoes, green tomatoes are still available in abundance.

Kay Fahey learned to cook fried green tomatoes from her mother, Gene Floyd Curlin, who grew up in Magee, Mississippi. ◆







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How to Grill a Whole Fish

For fish with irresistibly crisp skin and succulent, smoky flesh, keep the grill clean and the fire low

BY MIMA LECOCQ

whole fish hot off the grill—with its tempting crisp skin and juicy, tender meat—is one of my favorite foods, both to cook and to eat. I like to grill fish whole because, with the skin and head intact, they look so dramatic, and the skin keeps the fish moist and seals in the flavor. Yet because fish is more fragile than beef or poultry, it requires a little extra attention to keep it from falling apart on the grill. Choosing the right type of fish and cooking it over a fire that's not too hot helps to keep the fish moist and flavorful—and in one piece.

ADD MORE FLAVOR TO FISH WITH STUFFINGS AND MARINADES

Another advantage of grilling a whole fish is that you can fill the cavity with fresh herbs or slices of lemon,



or you can brush the insides with mustard or other seasonings. Once the cavity is filled, tie the fish with several pieces of butcher's twine to keep the filling inside. (I don't bother tying up small fish like mackerel.) Tying the fish also makes it easier to handle because the belly won't flop open as you try to turn it.

Marinades are another great way to flavor grilled fish. Just don't leave fish in an acidic marinade for more than a few hours. Acids such as lemon juice and vinegar will "cook" the flesh and, if left too long, can give the fish an unpleasantly mushy texture.

When using a glaze, baste only the *inside* of the fish before grilling; brush the outside with the remaining glaze once the fish is off the grill. Glazes usually contain honey or sugar, which, if basted on the skin before grilling, can cause the fish to stick and burn and generally make a mess of the grill.



A bit of oil seasons the grill to give you added protection against sticking. A rolled terry-cloth towel, tied with twine and soaked in oil, makes an easy-to-use "oil rag."

PICK A FIRM FISH FOR GRILLING

Firm-fleshed fish with a high oil content are the best choices. A high oil content helps keep the meat moist and gives you a bit of an advantage in getting the fish off the grill in one piece. Try strong-flavored fish, such as salmon, mackerel, and bluefish; they're particularly complemented by the distinctive, smoky flavor that grilling gives them. Less oily fish—snapper and rockfish, for example—can be grilled, too. To keep their flesh moist and prevent sticking, brush them with oil before you put them on the grill.

Shop for fish with your eyes and nose. When choosing fish for grilling, the general rules of freshness apply: Put your nose near the fish; it should

smell fresh, not strong or unpleasant. The eyes should be bright and full, not murky or sunken, and the flesh should feel firm and bounce back when pressed. Fresh fish is bright and shiny, not blemished or slimy.

When buying fish to grill, have your fishmonger clean and scale it. Some cooks say that grilling a whole fish with the scales intact will make the

fish less likely to stick to the grill, but I find it just makes a mess. A large fish like a salmon will be easier to serve if you have it boned before you cook it. The same is true for mackerel, too, but because of its anatomy, don't expect to get out every last bone.

USE A CLEAN, HOT GRILL TO KEEP FISH FROM STICKING

You should always grill on a clean rack, but this is especially important when cooking fish. Food will stick to a dirty grill, and if your fish sticks, your dinner is

doomed. Also, be sure the grill is hot before you put the fish on it. If the rack and fish heat up together, they'll form a bond that can be tough to break.

Once the grill is hot, give it a good scraping with a grill brush to get rid of any residue. Then, season the grill with a bit of oil for extra protection against sticking. I use a tightly rolled terry-cloth towel tied with twine and soaked in oil and rub it quickly over the grate. Just don't use too much oil or it will drip into the fire and cause flare-ups.

GRILL FISH OVER A GENTLE FIRE

Strong-flavored fish,

such as mackerel and

salmon, are a good

match for the distinctive

smoky flavor of the grill.

Because fish is delicate, it doesn't require the intense heat that's needed to sear meat and poultry. Set the

> grill rack at least four inches from the fire and grill the fish directly over moderately hot coals. If grilled over too high a heat, the skin will burn before the meat can cook.

> Turning a whole fish is the most nerve-wracking part. For the best results, let the fish cook for several minutes before turning, and turn it only once. For a larger fish, use two spatulas or a two-

pronged sauté fork and work carefully.

A fish tends to come off the grill easiest when it's done. In other words, if you have to chisel at the underside when turning it because it's sticking, it probably isn't done on that side yet. Leave the fish on until it comes off the grill with only a moderate amount of encouragement.

Cooking times will vary depending on the fish you're cooking and how hot your fire is. To test for doneness, slip a small knife into the back of the fish and gently pull the meat away. The meat should be

A few quick cuts make serving a whole fish easy



Holding a knife at an angle, slit the skin from nape to tail along one side of the backbone.



Slice through the fish down to the bone at the base of the tail and at the head.



Make another cut in the middle of the fillet to make two separate servings.



A sweet and salty soy glaze forms a light, savory crust on this grilled snapper. The skin becomes delightfully crisp and impossible to resist.

moist and cling for a moment before coming away. Don't cook the fish until it flakes or it will be dry.

Soy-Glazed Snapper

If you can't find snapper, choose any other moderately firm textured, delicately flavored fish, such as rockfish, sea bass, striped bass, or grouper. Serves four.

FOR THE GLAZE:

½ cup soy sauce
 ¼ cup sake
 ¼ cup honey
 1 Tbs. grated fresh ginger
 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 tsp. dry mustard 1/4 cup sesame oil

Black bean sauce to taste (optional)

FOR THE SNAPPER:

3 lb. whole snapper

1 bunch cilantro

4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

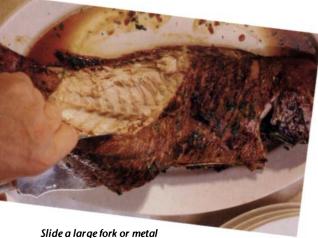
1-inch piece fresh ginger, thinly sliced Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste Oil for brushing

To make the glaze, combine the soy sauce, sake, honey, ginger, garlic, mustard, and sesame oil in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and let simmer until reduced to a thick glaze. Stir in the black bean sauce, if using.

Heat the grill, making sure it's clean. The coals should be medium hot. Baste the inside of the fish with some of the soy glaze; reserve the extra glaze. Layer the cilantro, garlic, and ginger in the belly cavity of the fish; season with salt and pepper. Wrap 3 or 4 pieces of butcher's twine around the fish; knot each piece tightly and trim any excess twine. Brush the outside of the fish with oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Cook on a medium-hot grill, turning once, until cooked through, about 10 min. per side. Liberally baste the grilled fish with the reserved soy glaze before serving.

(More recipes follow)



spatula under half of the fish and release the fillet. Repeat with the other half.



Lift out the skeleton, cut the remaining fillet in half, and serve.



A tomato-olive vinaigrette provides just the right touch of acidity for a rich, flavorful fish like mackerel. Its high oil content makes mackerel a particularly fine fish for grilling.

Mackerel Provençal

I think mackerel is one of the most underrated fish in the United States. Its rich, full flavor makes it ideal for grilling. *Serves four*.

FOR THE TOMATO-OLIVE VINAIGRETTE:

4 medium tomatoes, diced

2 Tbs. pitted, chopped brine-cured black olives, like niçoise

1 Tbs. chopped capers

1 Tbs. chopped flat-leaf parsley

2 Tbs. red-wine vinegar

3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

FOR THE MACKEREL:

1/4 cup Dijon mustard

4 tsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary

4 cleaned and boned mackerel (about $\frac{1}{3}$ lb. each) Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste Oil for brushing

In a mixing bowl, combine the tomatoes, olives, capers, parsley, vinegar, oil, salt, and pepper. Let stand while you prepare the mackerel. Heat the grill, making sure that it's clean. The coals should be medium hot. Combine the mustard and rosemary and brush the mixture in the belly cavity of each mackerel; season with salt and pepper. Brush the outside of the fish with oil and

sprinkle with salt and pepper. Grill over medium-hot coals until cooked through, about 5 min. per side. Serve with the tomato-olive vinaigrette.

Grilled Salmon with Red-Pepper Aioli

Measure your grill before trying to cook a very large fish. I find that a 7-pounder is about the biggest that will fit on my Weber at home. Serves ten.

FOR THE AIOLI:

2 egg yolks

11/2 cups extra-virgin olive oil

Juice of 1 lemon

1 large clove garlic, minced

1 red bell pepper, grilled, peeled, seeded, and chopped Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

FOR THE SALMON:

1 yellow onion, thinly sliced

1 bunch flat-leaf parsley

6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 lemon, thinly sliced

7-lb. whole salmon, cleaned and boned Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Oil for brushing

To make the aioli, whisk the egg yolks in a small bowl and very slowly drizzle in the oil, whisking all the while. When all the oil has been incorporated, add the lemon juice, garlic, and bell pepper; season with salt and pepper.

Heat the grill, making sure it's clean. The coals should be medium hot.

To prepare the fish, layer the onion, parsley, garlic, and lemon in the belly cavity of the salmon; season with salt and pepper. Wrap 3 or 4 pieces of butcher's twine around the fish, knotting each piece tightly and trimming any excess twine. Brush the outside of the fish with oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Put the fish on the hot grill and cook over medium-hot coals until done, turning once, about 20 min. on each side. Serve hot or cold with the red-pepper aioli.

Mima Lecocq and her husband, Tom McNary, own Carried Away, a take-out shop and caterer in Aptos, California. ◆



Wine Choices

Choose light red wines for the summery flavors of grilled fish

If the fish is delicate and the preparation is simple, stick with white wine. But slap the fish on a grill, add some bold flavors—rosemary, tomato, and olive; mustard and sesame oil; garlicky redpepper aioli—and often you'll do better with a red.

Although these three recipes differ widely, you

wouldn't go wrong with a cru Beaujolais, such as a Brouilly from Château La Chaize, a Moulin-à-Vent from Georges Duboeuf, or a California Gamay from Fetzer or Glen Ellen, as an all-purpose pour.

Otherwise, just about any wine with a light red color will do. Try a less expensive Pinot Noir, such as BV's Beautour Carneros or Bouchaine's Q.C. Fly. A southern French style red (Les Côtes Sauvages from California's Edmunds St. John), a South African Pinotage (a red hybrid that's a cross between Pinot Noir and Cinsault), or an Italian Dolcetto from the Piedmont would also be good. The soy-glazed snapper with its sweetness and spice would also pair well with off-dry whites, such as Gewürtztraminer and Riesling. I like the fruity Traminer Riesling blend from Rosemount of Australia. Rosina Tinari Wilson teaches and writes about

wine and food.

A sturdy yet tender crust slices easily and supports a sweet peach topping. The crust's rich flavor and crumbly texture are like those of the best butter cookies.



A Tender Tart Crust You Can Trust

A buttery, sweet dough made in a mixer rolls out easily and bakes to crisp perfection

BY ELINOR KLIVANS

y no-fail method of making tart crust was a case of necessity being the mother of invention. When I took my first job as a pastry chef, I somehow forgot to mention that I was a flop at making pastry crusts. After many tough, torn, and otherwise terrible attempts, I came up with this foolproof recipe for an exceptionally tender yet sturdy tart crust.

My "secret ingredient" turned out to be an electric mixer. Using it instead of my hands to mix the

dough guaranteed consistent results every time. The only trouble I had when testing the technique for this article was that I ate too much; I found myself nibbling away at the empty crusts, their cookie-like flavor and texture too tempting too resist.

TENDER, NOT FLAKY, IS THE GOAL

A tart is simply a pastry crust with shallow sides, a filling, and no top crust. Unlike pie crusts, tart crusts are removed from their pans after they're baked, which means they require a sturdier dough. Tart crusts are less flaky than pie crusts, but their marvelous buttery flavor and crumbly, cookie-like texture makes up for any loss of flakiness.





Butter—what else?—gives the tart its rich, buttery flavor. Start with it cold to keep the crust light.



Strive for a peas-and-cornmeal texture for properly mixed ingredients.



Don't worry about visible bits of butter. As the crust bakes, those bits form air pockets, which keep the pastry light.

Chill your ingredients to keep the crust light. I use a blend of all-purpose and cake flours; the lower gluten in the cake flour makes the crust less likely to toughen. Butter, which also acts as a tenderizer, gives the pastry its flavor. Sugar sweetens the crust and makes it brown nicely. The high proportion of sugar in this recipe also accounts for the sandy, cookie-like texture of the baked crust. I use confectioners' sugar for a more tender texture and a finer grain. I also add ground blanched almonds for a more crumbly texture. Baking powder, unusual in a tart crust, makes the pastry lighter and gives it a slight lift.

The author's "secret ingredient" for a foolproof tart crust is her electric mixer.

Your ingredients should be cool to help keep the dough cool as you work with it. That way, small pieces of butter will remain in the dough, forming air pockets when the pastry bakes, which keep the crust light. I always keep the egg and butter in the refrigerator until I'm ready to use them, and on hot summer days I even chill the dry ingredients.

Use an electric mixer to avoid overhandling the dough. Most tart crusts are mixed by hand, which is often where trouble begins. Hand mixing is slow going, and because your hands are warm, there's always the danger that the butter will become too soft, consequently making the dough oily.

In my quest for more reliable results, I tried mixing the dough in a food processor, but the machine worked so fast that I felt like the mixing was out of my control. My solution is using an electric mixer. The mixer works fast, but not too fast, blending the dough thoroughly but quickly so it stays cool. And, unlike in the food processor, I can see into the mixing bowl to judge the texture of my dough as it mixes.

I begin with the dry ingredients and butter on low speed, mixing just until the largest butter pieces are the size of peas and the rest looks like coarse cornmeal. Then I add the egg and mix until the dough just holds together and begins to come away from the sides of the bowl. The dough should be smooth with bits of butter still visible. I shape it into a disk, wrap it in plastic, and chill it. The cold relaxes the gluten so the dough is more

manageable and less likely to shrink during baking. When rolling the pastry, dust the work surface

and rolling pin with cake flour. Cake flour has less gluten than all-purpose, so it won't toughen the crust. Shape the crust to the tart pan and chill it again to firm it and help it keep its structure. At this point, you can wrap the crust and freeze it for up to two months. When still frozen, fill it and bake it or blind-bake it.

No-Fail Butter Tart Crust

I usually make this dough in a stand mixer. If using a hand mixer, you'll need to mix the ingredients a little longer to get the results described. The extra mixing won't hurt this very forgiving dough. Yields one 11-inch crust.

4½ oz. (1 cup) all-purpose flour 1 oz. (¼ cup) cake flour; more for dusting 2 oz. (¾ cup) confectioners' sugar 3 Tbs. ground blanched almonds
½ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt
4 oz. (8 Tbs.) chilled unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces
1 large chilled egg, lightly beaten

Make the dough—In a large, deep bowl, mix the flours, sugar, almonds, baking powder, and salt. Add the butter and beat with an electric mixer with the whisk attachment on low speed until most of the butter is the size of peas, about 1½ min. The mixture will look crumbly, and the crumbs will vary in size. Add the egg; mix until the dough is smooth and just comes away from the sides of the bowl, about 30 seconds; you should see distinct flecks of butter. Shape the dough into a 6-inch disk, wrap it in plastic, and chill for at least 1 hour before rolling it out.

Roll out the dough—Lightly butter an 11-inch fluted tart pan. Lightly dust the work surface and rolling pin with cake flour. Roll the chilled dough into a 14-inch round about $\frac{3}{16}$ inch thick. Lift and turn the dough several times as you roll to prevent sticking; dust the surface and the rolling pin with flour as needed. Use a dough scraper or a spatula to loosen the rolled dough; carefully roll it up around the rolling pin. Unroll the dough onto the prepared pan and gently fit it into the



Easy-to-handle dough does your bidding. After rolling it into a 14-inch round, roll it around the pin and unroll it onto your pan.



Fold the trimmed overhang into the rim and press it into the pan. This neatens and strengthens the sides of the tart.

pan. Trim the edges, leaving a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch overhang. Fold the overhang over itself and press it against the sides of the pan to reinforce the sides of the tart shell. Chill for at least 30 min. before baking. (The tart shell can be wrapped in plastic and then in foil and frozen for up to 2 months.)

Blind-bake the crust—Heat the oven to 400°F. Cover the chilled tart shell, including its edges, with a double thickness of foil. (You don't need to prick the crust first.) Fill the tart with dried beans, rice, or pie weights, and bake for 15 min. Remove the weights and the foil. Reduce the temperature to 350° and bake until the edges of the tart shell are lightly browned and beginning to pull away from the sides of the pan and the crust is golden, 12 to 15 min. (Begin checking at 12 min.) Cool on a wire rack in the tart pan before unmolding and filling.

Peach & Mascarpone Filling

Mascarpone is a light, creamy cheese that pairs wonderfully with all kinds of fruit. This tart is topped with peaches, but blueberries or apricots would also look pretty. Yields enough filling for one 11-inch tart crust.

1 cup chilled mascar pone ½ cup confectioners' sugar 1 tsp. grated orange zest ½ cup chilled heavy cream 1 tsp. vanilla extract

6 large peaches, pitted, peeled if desired, and sliced $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick $\frac{1}{4}$ cup apricot jam, warmed over medium heat until liquefied

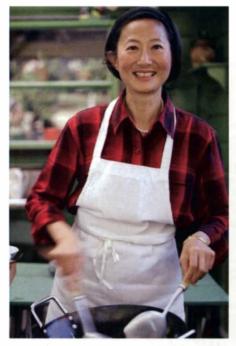
In a medium bowl, mix the mascarpone and confectioners' sugar and stir until smooth. Add the orange zest and vanilla extract. Whip the cream until soft peaks appear and fold it into the mascarpone mixture. Spread the mixture into a baked and cooled tart crust. Top with the peach slices. Brush the peaches with the liquefied apricot jam to glaze. Refrigerate the tart at least 1 hour or overnight before serving.

Elinor Klivans is the author of Bake & Freeze Desserts (William Morrow, 1994) and Bake & Freeze Chocolate Desserts (to be published by Broadway Books this fall). She lives in Camden, Maine.



The baked tartcrustis ready for your favorite filling. Before unmolding, let the crust cool on a rack.

MASTER CLASS



"Most chefs in Bangkok won't reveal their pad thai secrets, but I persisted and found one who taught me," says author Su-Mei Yu.



Sweet, sour, spicy, salty. Pad thai is one of the best examples of the marvelous flavor and texture contrasts that characterize Thai cooking.

Making Pad Thai at Home

Toss a tangle of rice noodles in a hot wok, add authentic ingredients, and you'll master a Thai stir-fry favorite

BY SU-MEI YU



Certain ingredients are absolutely essential for authentic-tasting pad thai.

Rice noodles, dried baby shrimp, fish sauce, and pickled salted cabbage are all a must. Don't soak the dried shrimp for pad thai—you want them chewy.

Photos: Ben Fink



very year, I return to Thailand in search of recipes, books, kitchen tools, and to steep myself in the cooking traditions of my birthplace. On one of those trips, I made it my mission to learn to make pad thai from the best vendors in Bangkok. That tangle of noodles, stirfried with an array of sweet, sour, salty, and spicy ingredients, is a national favorite. It's a one-dish meal, and Thais eat it any time, from breakfast to midnight supper, with iced tea, iced coffee, limeade, or beer.

Vendors guard their secrets jealously, but I found a restaurateur who apprenticed me at the *pad thai* stand in front of his restaurant. Orders came rapidly from a long line of regular patrons. It was hard to listen and cook at the same time—you make *pad thai* one order at a time, adding ingredients in quick succession. Shouts of "no chiles, lots of sugar, peanuts, and bean sprouts," "everything, with an extra egg," and "no dried shrimp, but lots of bean sprouts and chives" continued as I tried to keep the orders straight and not burn them.

At my house in southern California, I cook in an outdoor kitchen that's under a lean-to, like the one I remember from childhood. And even when I make pad thai for a group, I do it one order at a time, as I learned to in Bangkok. I recommend that you do it that way, too. You'll have better control over the noodles, and your technique will improve with each turn at the wok. I've listed ingredient quantities in the recipe to yield a very generous one-person serving, so multiply the amounts for the number of people you'll serve.

USE EASY SUBSTITUTIONS FOR HARD-TO-FIND INGREDIENTS

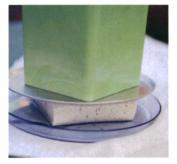
Certain ingredients are essential for making a proper *pad thai* (pronounced PAD TIE), so you'll need to make a trip to an Asian grocer or to the Asian food section of a well-stocked supermarket. If neither of those are convenient, you can order ingredients by mail (see sources, p. 63). Some ingredients for *pad thai* have familiar substitutes, however, as you'll see from the photos below.



And certain substitutions are just fine. Scallions work for Chinese chives; rice or white vinegar can replace Thai vinegar; and arugula works well for Asian pennywort.

Fresh banana blossoms add crunch, but Belgian endive is a good substitute. If you use banana blossoms, pull off the red leaves to reveal the white inner core. Cut the core into wedges and soak in cold water with a squeeze of lime.

First, fry the tofu



Put the tofu in a pie plate to drain and set another plate on top. Weight it with a heavy canister (about 3 pounds is good) for two hours. Slice the tofu into strips.



Heat the wok until it feels quite hot. Add 3 tablespoons oil. When the oil is smoking, fry the tofu strips until they're golden brown and crispy, 1½ to 2 minutes on each side. Drain the strips on paper towels and slice them into thinner strips. Discard the remaining oil.

Soak the rice noodles in lukewarm water until they're pliable, about 15 minutes. Drain, press them dry with a towel so they don't get gummy, and cover them with a damp towel to keep them moist but not wet. (Wet noodles would make the oil in the wok spatter.)



lined up for action

Organization is key, so arrange the ingredients in the order you'll need them. Line up the oil, garlic, soaked noodles, water, vinegar, fish sauce, fried tofu, baby shrimp, salted cabbage, peanuts, chili powder, sugar, bean sprouts, scallions, and egg, as well as the ingredients for the garnish.

Get all your ingredients

Rice noodles are the base for pad thai. They're made from rice flour and range from vermicelli-thin strands to wider noodles. At the Asian market where I shop in San Diego, I buy fresh ones, but dried rice noodles are much easier to find, and they're easy to use. They'll need a soak in warm water for 15 minutes until they bend without breaking.

Condiments add a complex texture and taste. That vinegar adds authentic tang, but you can substitute rice or distilled white vinegar, both of which are slightly sharper. Dried baby shrimp are both sweet and salty (but surprisingly, they don't taste fishy). You don't need to soak baby shrimp for pad that; unsoaked,

they're pleasantly chewy. Salted cabbage adds a salty-earthy taste that might remind you of salt-packed capers; it needs a quick rinse before use. You'll recognize it by its glazed brown ceramic jar. Chinese chives give authentic pungency, but if you can't get them, scallions are fine.

Fresh banana blossoms add a crunchy garnish that's traditional. They're difficult to find, and Belgian endive is a good alternative. You might see pickled banana blossoms on an Asian grocer's shelf, but don't buy them; they won't give the crunch you're after. Bitter-sour Asian pennywort is a traditional pad thai garnish. It's also hard to find, so use arugula instead.

TAKE TIME TO ORGANIZE SO YOU CAN ASSEMBLE IN A FLASH

There's a lot of time involved in getting all the ingredients together for this dish, but mainly it's just a matter of chopping, slicing, and measuring. Once it's all prepped, *pad thai* comes together fast over high heat. Here's how to make it go smoothly.

Prepare all your ingredients ahead. Once prepped, line them up in order of addition, close at hand. I use a collection of little bowls and plates; sometimes I even make traditional bowls by sewing banana leaves together. If you run out of dishes for your ingredients, use teacups and saucers. The point

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Start the stir-fry with oil, garlic, and rice noodles



Heat a large skillet until it feels very hot when you hold your hand above it. If the heat is too intense, the noodles will clump; if it's too low, they'll get soggy.



Add 4 tablespoons oil. When it begins to smoke, swirl the wok to coat it with the hot oil. Add the garlic. Stir briskly for about 30 seconds. Lower the heat slightly if the garlic looks like it's starting to burn.



Stir-fry the noodles. Use two spatulas, scooping and tossing to coat and separate. Add a table-spoon or two of water to keep the noodles from bunching up, and use the corner of your spatula to detangle them, if you need to. Stir-fry until the noodles are soft but not soggy, 1 to 2 minutes.

Shake and scoop the noodles while adding flavor and texture



Add the vinegar, fish sauce, tofu, shrimp, and cabbage. Continue to stir-fry for about 2 minutes.

Real pad thai is

best made the

way Thai street

vendors do, one

batch at a time.

is for the ingredients to be organized and easy to grab.

Use a large wok, skillet, or griddle. The larger the cooking vessel, the more room you'll have to combine in-

gredients and cook the noodles evenly. I use an anodized-aluminum wok, which heats up beautifully and doesn't need seasoning. If you have an electric stove, use a big skillet or a wok with a flat base. Whichever pan you select, the important thing is to have good contact with your heat

source. Don't use a wok ring, even though it will mean steadying the wok with your hand.

Be sure to use enough heat. If the heat is too low, the noodles will get soggy; if it's too high, however, the noodles will clump and tangle.

Use two spatulas to stir-fry. It might be tempting to grab your tongs, but don't; their sharp edges will break the noodles.

I like wok paddles shallow shovels with curved edges that make it easy to scoop and shake the noodles to separate them as you stir-fry. If the noodles need loosening, add a tablespoon or two of water.

The amounts suggested here are guidelines. Pad thai varia-

tions are based on personal preference and regional style; there's no fixed formula. This recipe is my version; it's a simple, classic pad thai with a good balance of sweet, sour, spicy, and salty flavors.

Pad Thai

For the procedure, follow the photos starting on p. 60. Serves one or two.

1/4 block firm tofu

8 Tbs. peanut or light vegetable oil

1 large handful thin rice noodles

(about 6 oz.)

3 large cloves garlic, minced

 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water (use as needed, 1 Tbs. at a time) 1 Tbs. rice vinegar or distilled vinegar

11/2 tsp. fish sauce

2 Tbs. dried baby shrimp

3 Tbs. Tien Jin brand salted cabbage, rinsed, drained, and squeezed dry

2 Tbs. roasted peanuts, skinned and crushed

1 tsp. chili powder

2 Tbs. sugar

1 cup fresh bean sprouts

1 small handful Chinese chives or 2 scallion tops, cut in 2-inch lengths

1 egg

FOR THE GARNISH:

1 lime, cut in wedges

2 to 3 wedges fresh banana blossom

or Belgian endive

½ cup fresh bean sprouts

2 to 3 blades Chinese chives or scallions

1 small bunch Asian pennywort or arugula

Add the crushed peanuts, chili powder, and sugar. Mix thoroughly, about 2 minutes. Quickly mix in the bean sprouts and Chinese chives.

SOURCES FOR ASIAN INGREDIENTS

Asian grocers and supermarkets with wellstocked Asian foods sections will carry the ingredients for pad thai (look for A Taste of Thai brand). Or you can order ingredients from the following sources:

Anzen Importers, 736 NE Martin Luther King Blvd., Portland, OR 97232; 503/233-5111.

A Taste of Thai, PO Box AX, Old Saybrook, CT 06475; 800/243-0897

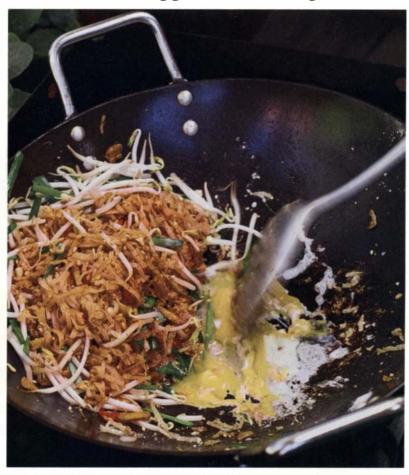
Oriental Food Market & Cooking School, 2801 West Howard St., Chicago, IL 60645; 312/574-2826.

The Oriental Pantry, 423 Great Rd., Acton, MA 01720; 800/828-0368.

Spice Merchant, PO Box 524, Jackson Hole, WY 83001; 800/551-5999.

Su-Mei Yu, who owns Saffron restaurant in San Diego, was born in Thailand. She teaches Thai cooking and is at work on a book about her life and cooking.

Scramble the egg and add the garnishes



Push the noodles aside, add 1 tablespoon oil, and break an egg into the wok. Scramble the egg lightly for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. Fold the noodle mixture back on top of the egg. Roll the pad thai onto a serving platter so the scrambled egg ends up on top.



Garnish the pad thai. Arrange lime wedges, banana blossoms, bean sprouts, Chinese chive blades, and pennywort around the pad thai and serve immediately.

The Right Grilling Tools for Great Summer Meals

Improve your outdoor cooking skills with our selection of clever grilling equipment

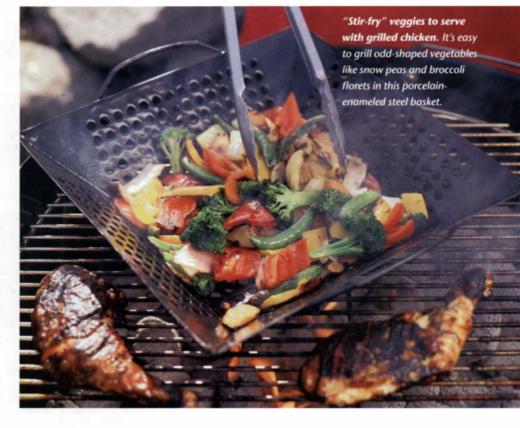
BY SUSIE MIDDLETON

rilled pizza. Grilled rosemary chicken skewers. Grilled tuna salad niçoise. This may sound like dinner at your favorite Mediterranean restaurant, but there's no reason why you can't make this food at home on your own grill. Tricky maneuvers like handling floppy pizza dough, flipping fragile fish fillets, or turning skinny vegetables are a lot easier when you use some of the well-designed equipment now on the market. And grilling even the simplest food is more fun when you're well-equipped, not with gadgets, but with tools that are truly useful.

After scouring stores and catalogs, I gathered up the stuff that looked promising, piled it in my car (along with my husband and the dog), and headed for the beach in Rhode Island for a weekend of testing and tasting. After grilling everything from herbed flatbread to whole mackerel, I became a fan of the following tools.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT FUEL: HARDWOOD CHARCOAL OR GOOD-QUALITY BRIQUETTES

If you're a gas griller, then starting your fire is flick-of-the-switch easy, as long as you have enough liquid propane. Keep track



of this with an inexpensive magnetic patch called a liquid propane level indicator that you attach to the canister. It changes color according to how much gas you have left in the tank. If you own a charcoal grill, you'll have to decide what kind of fuel to use. I used to let my lighterfluid-wielding, briquettehugging husband rule the grill. But after a stint at Al Forno in Providence, Rhode Island, where I learned to make the restaurant's famous grilled pizza over fire stoked with hardwood charcoal, I saw the light, and we were born again into the world of natural hardwood charcoal. This is the quickest lighting, hottest burning, cleanest, and

Liquid propane Hardwood level charcoal indicator. briquettes. Sunbeam, Weber, \$6.99 \$9.99 20-lb. bag Nature's Own Charwood. People's Woods, \$8.99/ 17.6-lb. bag

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best smelling fuel for your charcoal fire.

Natural hardwood charcoal is pure wood, aged for a year to eliminate creosote and resins, and then baked in kilns fired by grain alcohol, not petroleum, so that no residual petroleum remains in the charcoal. It is simply the char left after the wood is reduced, like the leavings of a beach bonfire—which is exactly what it smells (and sparks) like when lit. An excellent mail-order source for natural hardwood charcoal is People's Woods, which carries Nature's Own 100% Natural Hardwood Chunk Charcoal. All this maple wood comes from a government-approved Canadian reforestation program.

If you can't get natural hardwood charcoal, buy high-quality briquettes like Weber's Hardwood Charcoal Briquettes. These do contain some binders of lime and cornstarch, but they don't have the petroleum, nitrates, and cheap fillers of sand and clay that other composition briquettes often have.

START THE FIRE: KISS LIGHTER FLUID GOODBYE

For charcoal grillers, there are three terrific ways to start your fire without liquid petroleum products, which are stinky, unfriendly to the environment, and becoming illegal in several states. Chimney starters, metal canisters with heatproof handles, are easy to use: Load the top with charcoal, the bottom with crumpled paper, and light the paper. The air draws the flames rapidly up through the chimney and heats the coals. In about 20 minutes, your coals are red-hot and ready to be tipped out into the grill. Weber's RapidFire Chimney Starter is particularly nice. It has an extra-large capacity, which makes it a good choice for larger grills. It also has a nifty steadying handle to help you safely pour out the coals.

If you don't have a chimney starter, tuck two or three solid paraffin lighter cubes into your pile of charcoal to replace the newspaper and kindling you'd normally use to start a fire. Light the starter cubes (which are odorless and smokeless), and they'll get your coals going.

Another clean and efficient way to start a charcoal fire is an **electric charcoal starter.** Nestle the iron coil inside a pile of coals and plug the starter into

RapidFire
Chimney
Starter,
Weber,
\$14.99

Electric starter,
Charcoal
Companion,
\$15.99

on fi
wood
stro
not
chui
whee
or ro
mor
fish
Firestarters,

irestarters, Weber, \$2.49/box

a regular 120-volt electric outlet (via a heavy-duty extension cord). It immediately begins heating; remove after eight minutes, and your fire is well on its way. This is by far the easiest method to get a charcoal fire going, but it does have one problem: the starter is white-hot when it comes out of the fire, and it needs to rest in a safe place until it cools down. This could be tricky if you have small children in your household or, as at my house, a large dog with a wagging tail.

ADD SMOKY FLAVOR WITH WOOD CHIPS AND CHUNKS

Once you've got your fire going, you can decide if you want to use **wood chips or chunks** to lend a smoky flavor to your food. Play around with these flavorings---cherry, apple, pecan, hickory, and

Hickory
wood chips,
Charcoal
Companion,
\$9.49/
3.5-lb. box

Southern
cherry wood
chunks, Grill
Lover's Catalog, \$9.99/
6-lb. bag

mesquite, to name a few—to suit your own taste. You'll want to add the chips, or the bigger chunks, just a few minutes before you're ready to put the food on. You can soak them first in water, beer, or wine, or you can use them dry. I found that dry chips provide plenty of smoky flavor, and that I'm not crazy about cooking with the steamy, wet heat of

Either way, the flavor your food takes on from wood chips is subtle; certain woods, like mesquite, give a much stronger flavor, which you may or may not like. And using wood chips and chunks seems to make the most sense when slow-cooking foods, like a chicken or roast, over indirect heat; the food has more time to absorb flavor. Thin fillets of fish or chicken do pick up some flavor if cooked directly over flaming or steaming chips, or if you briefly cover the grill.

soaked chips.

In a charcoal grill, you can toss chips or chunks directly into the fire (stand



back: dry chips act like fuel, and your fire will flare up a bit), but in a gas grill, it's a good idea to use a **metal smoking box** to hold the chips so that the fuel port doesn't get clogged. The boxes are available with or without covers. A great alternative is all-natural compressed wood pellets that arrive in small tins. All you have to do is remove a sticker to expose a hole, drop the can into the coals (making sure it's surrounded by heat), and again, stand back. The can takes just a few minutes to heat up, and then it sends off a stream of smoke like a spouting whale. You can

also improvise and put loose chips into a disposable aluminum-foil pan punched with holes.

CHOOSE THE SMARTEST TOOLS FOR EASIER COOKING

Over the years I've tried to cook just about every kind of vegetable on my grill. I've rigged up all sorts of goofy aluminum-foil trays to keep asparagus spears and the like from falling through the cracks. But now I'm sold on an incredibly versatile grilling tool on which I can cook all those fall-through-the-cracks foods, and I can also use it for shellfish and skin-on fish. I had seen the flat porcelain-enameled steel cooking grids in stores; I'm not sure why

Porcelaincoated Fish and Vegetable Turner, EKCO, \$16.99

16" Pizza Grill

Topper, \$13.95



CeramiCooker, Early Morning Pottery, \$18.99

vegetable that are usually hard to grill—cabbage, fennel, snow peas, broccoli—and tossed them into the wok

over a hot fire. After stirring them around for a few minutes, I had delicious veggies, caramelized on the outside, crisp-tender on the inside. Since there are so many

cooks in search of the perfect grilled pizza, I next tried some items designed to solve a few of the problems that come up when working with the dough directly on the grill. I found one porcelain-enameled pizza grid (which is more holes—4500 of them—than steel) that I liked. Because of the porcelain finish, dough doesn't stick, and the grid can be twirled around to move the dough over or away from hot spots on the grill. You can also use a flat enameled grid for small pizzas.

Another variation on the porcelaincoated steel grid, new to the market this year, is a **fish and vegetable turner**. De-

signed to allow you to flip food without handling it with utensils, this
turner consists of two small
pieces of porcelain-enameled
steel that are joined together
like a book with hinges. While it
isn't a perfect tool (it doesn't hold
a lot, and the metal handle is a
bit awkward), it is very handy for
cooking one small whole fish
and does the best job on fully
cooking eggplant slices. Usually grilled eggplant winds up
charred on the outside, raw on

Double-pronged skewers, Weber, \$9.99/package of 8

Fresh rosemary skewers, grocery stores, \$2.99/bunch

the inside. Sandwiched between the two covers of this turner, the eggplant actually steamed, cooking the inside thoroughly, while the outside became nicely caramelized.

What about all those grilling baskets intended to hold fish, vegetables, or hamburgers? Some grillmeisters like them, but I find them very awkward to use. And now that the porcelain-coated grids are

Compact set (wok-shaped and small flat) porcelain-coated Grill Toppers, Chef's Catalog, \$19.99/set

I never bought one. All you have to do is brush oil on the grid (sometimes called a Griffo Grill, after its inventor, or a Grill Topper), put it on the grill when the fire's ready, and let it heat for a minute. Then grill just about anything on it.

You'll get terrific results with swordfish and tuna steaks, salmon fillets, whole skin-on fish, scallops and shrimp, skinny vegetables like green beans and scallions, large slices of eggplant and zucchini, and juicy things like tomatoes. You won't lose things into the fire, and there's a handy lip on the grid to push up against when you're turning food over. Best of all, the porcelain-coated surface is as close to nonstick as you'll get with equipment designed to withstand high heat.

After trying the flat grid, which is available in small and large sizes, I really had fun with the wok-shaped porcelainenameled steel grid, designed for stirfrying on the grill. I cut up several kinds of

Add fire and flavor with tips from the pros

Clifford Pleau, The California Grill, Lake Buena Vista, California

"I love my chimney starter, and I like to use it like a mini-grill. When the coals are glowing, instead of pouring them out, I put the grill grate on top of the starter. I use that superhot convected heat to sear tuna steaks for my wife and myself or to quickly blister red bell peppers."

John Ash, Fetzer Vineyards, Hopland, California

"One of my favorite grilling tricks is to use herbs to flavor the food. In summer, when herbs such as sage, thyme, and rosemary are getting leggy, grab handfuls, soak them briefly in water, and toss them onto the coals, put the food on, and cover the grill. The food will pick up the wonderful aroma of the herbs."

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widely available, even the baskets designed to hold whole fish aren't really necessary. I cooked some good-sized mackerel on the porcelain-enameled grid and got crispy skin and perfectly cooked flesh. I'd avoid those baskets.

You might think to avoid something as funny looking as a porcelain ceramic chicken sitter, but you'd be missing out on a scrumptious smoky chicken. This odd-looking thing cooks unbelievably tasty chicken with extra-crispy skin, and it can be used in any grill with a lid tall enough to cover the height of the propped up chicken. There are several variations on this idea on the market. I tested one called the CeramiCooker, made by Early Morning Pottery, by setting it directly on the grill grate. I pushed my hot charcoal to the sides of the grill,



Gordon Hamersley, Hamersley's Bistro, Boston, Massachusetts

"A big mistake grillers often make is starting to cook before the coals are really hot. Be sure your coals are glowing red under a layer of white ash. Use a long-handled utensil to stir up the coals, shake off the white ash, and distribute the coals evenly. With a really hot fire, the food will sear properly, and it won't stick as much."

OXO Good Grips barbecue tools, General Housewares, \$24.99/set

put a foil drip pan under the chicken, and covered the grill, leaving the air vents open. The chicken was delicious, and the ceramic cooker cleaned up easily.

A good set of skewers is essential, and Weber's Double-Pronged Skewers make a lot of sense. Awkward shrimp or recalcitrant round vegetables like cherry tomatoes will stay put when you turn them, instead of spinning around, so that you can actually grill two sides of the food. Also keep an eye out for metal skewers with a flat edge, which can prevent spinning, too.

If you're looking for a lovely rustic presentation for a party, try using fresh rosemary skewers. I was surprised to find that these really do gently flavor whatever is cooked on them. First, strip most of the leaves off and thread chicken or pork in strips (saté style) for a nice presentation.

COOK WITH HEAT-RESISTANT TONGS AND TURNERS

There are a zillion sets of grilling utensils on the market. I'm actually most comfortable with two simple tools: a pair of 16-inch stainless-steel restaurant-style tongs and a long-handled natural-bristle pastry brush for basting. I also find that a spatula-type turner can be handy—especially if it's a combination tool like the turner/tong from Lamson & Goodnow. With this terrific utensil, you can move just about anything without damaging it.

If you really want to own a knockout set of grilling tools, be sure to hold each piece to see if it's comfortable before buying the set. And keep an eye out for heatresistant handles. (This is the disadvantage of all-purpose stainless-steel tongs, which heat up quickly over a hot fire.) OXO Good Grips' set is lightweight and dishwasher safe; Lamson & Goodnow's is strong, well-made, and good-looking.

What about protecting your hands from the heat? I'm not a big fan of those bulky grilling mitts; I feel like they take

away the tactile sensation of grilling. But I do keep two or three clean old dishtowels on hand to wrap around hot handles or to open the air vents on the grill.

Rosewoodhandled 4-piece

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tools, Lamson &

Goodnow, \$60/set

Susie Middleton is an associate editor for Fine Cooking. •

SOURCES FOR GRILLING EQUIPMENT

Mail-order houses

Chef's Catalog, 3215 Commercial Ave., Northbrook, IL 60062-1900; 800/338-3232. Grill Lover's Catalog/Char-Broil, PO Box 1300, Columbus, GA 31902-1300; 800/241-8981.

People's Woods, 75 Mill St., Cumberland, RI 02864; 800/729-5800 (outside Rhode Island): 401/725-2700.

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Manufacturers

AMCO Corporation, 901 North Kilpatrick Ave., Chicago, IL 60651; 312/379-2100. Bar-B-Q Woods, Inc., 800 E. 14th St., Newton, KS 67114; 800/528-0819. Charcoal Companion, 7955 Edgewater Dr., Oakland, CA 94621; 800/521-0505 (outside California); 510/632-2100. Early Morning Pottery, PO Box 25, Rickreall, OR 97371; 800/513-9740. EKCO Housewares, 9234 West Belmont Ave., Franklin Park, IL 60131-2808; 800/678-8600. Lamson & Goodnow, 45 Conway St., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; 800/872-6564.

Oscarware, Inc., 749 Priceville Rd., Bonnieville, KY 42713; 888/672-2797. OXO, General Housewares Corp., 1536 Beech St., Terre Haute, IN 47804; 800/545-4411. Weber-Stephen Products Co., PO Box 1999, Palatine, IL 60078-1999; 800/99-WEBER.



Summer pudding is a berry's finest moment. Peak-ofthe-season fruit gives this dessert a bright crimson hue and an irresistible flavor.

Simply Delicious Summer Pudding

Fragrant berries and fine-crumbed white bread make the most luscious dessert of the season

BY KATHLEEN STEWART

very year, I celebrate the arrival of the first berries at the farmers' market by making summer pudding. I can't think of any other dessert that captures the flavor of the season so well. Not only is this traditional English dessert delicious, it's also incredibly simple to make. There's hardly any cooking involved, no long list of ingredients or complicated techniques—just line a mold with white bread, fill it with sugared berries, and refrigerate it overnight. But when it's unmolded on a plate, the tall, crimson pudding drenched in its own sweet juice is wonderful to look at. And it tastes of summer itself.

SUMMER PUDDING BEGINS WITH BERRIES

A proper English summer pudding is made with only raspberries and currants, but you can make it with any combination of berries. Besides raspberries and red currants, I like blackberries, loganberries, strawberries, boysenberries, and black currants. Let your choice be dictated by whatever's ripest.

The surest sign of a fresh berry is a heady perfume. The first thing to do when shopping for berries is to smell them. An intoxicating fragrance is the sign



Layers of bread triangles make the base and top of the pudding. With their points to the center of the mold, the triangles create a perfect circle.



Build a leakproof pudding. Overlap the rectangular slices slightly on the sides of the mold to help keep the berries inside the pudding. Bread that's a bit stale holds up better than fresh slices.

of a berry at its peak. Stains on the bottom of the berry basket indicate crushed fruit; reject those berries, as well as any that show signs of mold.

Berries are quite fragile and don't always fare well on the journey from farm to market. If you know of a field where you can pick your own, by all means do so.

Avoid washing berries: they absorb water like a sponge. Just pick them over gently to remove any leaves or stems. If you really need to wash them, rinse them briefly under a gentle stream of water; under no

hotos: Mark Thomas

Warm the berries just enough to get their juices flowing. You want them to keep their shape and fresh flavor. They're ready as soon as the sugar melts.



circumstances let them soak. Strawberries are the exception: they're often sandy from the soil in which they grow, and sandy summer pudding, while it sounds charming, would be hard on the molars. Put strawberries in a colander, rinse them with tepid water, lay them on paper towels, and blot them dry.

The berries need to be cooked briefly to bring out their juices and melt the sugar. Don't cook them too long or they'll lose their shape and their fresh taste.

Good-quality frozen berries work well, too. But be aware that they're juicier than fresh berries when they're cooked. You may want to reserve a little of the juice to add later to the unmolded pudding.

IMPROVISE A PUDDING MOLD

A charlotte mold is ideal for summer pudding. It looks like a bucket with little heart-shaped handles on the sides. Often made of tin, it has a flat bottom and tall, slightly sloping sides that are easy to line. When it's unmolded, you'll have a pretty pudding that won't fall over.

A soufflé dish, with its flat bottom and deep sides, makes a fine substitute for a charlotte mold. You can even use a deep mixing bowl. You may have to cut your bread a bit differently to accommodate the size and shape of your mold.

USE A FINE-CRUMBED WHITE BREAD

The bread for summer pudding must be a dense, fine-crumbed white loaf. This is no place for fluffy bread or a rustic country loaf. Look instead for a long, brick-shaped loaf with a thin crust and a close-textured crumb, sometimes called a *pain de mie* or Pullman loaf. Check your local bakery to see if it



Before filling the mold, let the berries cool slightly so their juices thicken. The pudding won't be quite so wet and the bread will hold up better.

offers one you like. Pepperidge Farm's white sandwich bread also works quite well. Bread that's two to three days old makes a sturdier pudding.

Lining the mold with plastic wrap will make the pudding easier to unmold. It also helps keep more of the berry juice inside the pudding.

As you assemble the pudding, be sure to fit the slices of bread snugly together or the juicy filling will

spill through. The triangular slices that make the top and base of the pudding should be as close together as possible. Scraps of leftover bread can be used to fill in any gaps. When you set the rectangular slices on the sides of the mold, overlap them a bit. This will help keep the berries from leaking and will make a sturdier pudding.

Once you've assembled the pudding, put a flat plate on top and weight it with a large can. Set the mold inside a larger plate or dish to catch the juice that will overflow. As the pudding sits under the weight overnight, the bread absorbs the juice and the bright color of the berries, and the whole thing is compacted into a firm, unified shape.

UNMOLD IUST BEFORE SERVING

Wait until you're ready to serve the pudding before unmolding it. It *will* stand up, but probably not for very long. Choose a serving plate that's slightly

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Choose a mix of

the ripest berries.

An intoxicating perfume

means a berry

at its peak.



Triangles make the rounds. As you assemble the layer that will become the base, turn the slices over once so they soak up plenty of the sweet berry juice.

bowled to catch the escaping juice. Put the plate on top of the mold, invert both, and remove the mold. Reserve the juice to spoon over each serving.

Summer Pudding

Like most berry desserts, summer pudding begs for cream. Serve it with *crème fraîche* or softly whipped heavy cream. *Serves four to six*.

6 to 6½ cups mixed ripe berries ¾ to 1 cup sugar About 24 slices firm-textured white bread, crusts removed

In a saucepan, combine the berries and ¾ cup of the sugar. Cook over medium heat until the berries are juicy but still hold their shape, about 5 min. Taste and add more sugar if needed. Let the berries cool to lukewarm.

Line a 1-qt. charlotte mold, soufflé dish, or mixing bowl with plastic wrap, letting the excess wrap hang over the sides. Cut 16 bread slices at an angle on two opposite sides to make triangles with two long, even sides and a narrower base. Cut the remaining slices in half lengthwise to make rectangles about 3 inches long. Arrange half the bread triangles with their points to the center on the bottom of the mold to cover it completely. Arrange the rectangular slices around the sides, overlapping them slightly. Fill any gaps with scraps of bread. Spoon the berries and their juice into the bread-lined mold.

Cover the berries with the remaining bread triangles, turning each slice over once so it soaks up some of the berry juice. Cover with the excess plastic wrap. Put a flat plate large enough to cover the surface of the pudding on top and set a 2- to 3-lb. weight (such as a large can of tomatoes or beans) on top of the plate. Put the weighted mold in a shallow bowl to catch any overflowing juice. Refrigerate overnight.

To unmold, remove the weighted plate and peel back the plastic wrap. Choose a serving platter with sides to catch any juice when the pudding is removed from its mold. Set the serving platter upside down on top of the mold and turn them both over. Give the mold a sharp shake and lift if off. The pudding should slide right out. Remove the plastic wrap. Spoon any excess juice over the top of the pudding. Cut into wedges to serve.

Kathleen Stewart is a partner in the Downtown Bakery & Creamery in Healdsburg, California. ◆



Weighting the pudding with a heavy can will give it a compact shape. Be sure to set the pudding mold inside a shallow bowl to catch the juice that will overflow.



A slightly bowled plate will catch every bit of the pudding's juice. Serve it with a dollop of whipped cream or crème fraîche.

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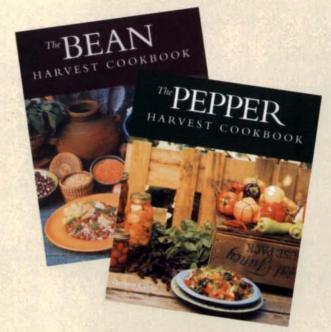
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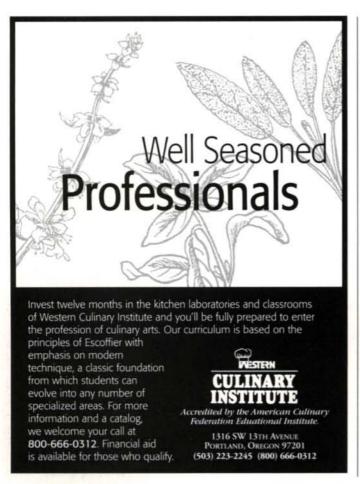
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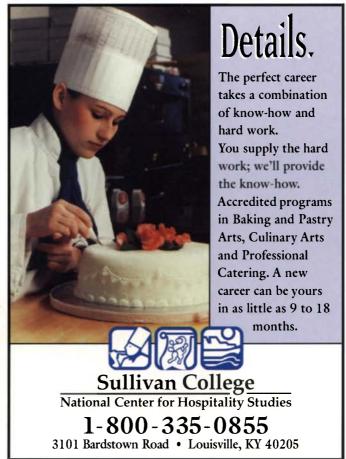
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Poaching fresh fruit for tender texture



Lay parchment on top of the fruit as it simmers in syrup. This helps the fruit cook more evenly.

Poaching fruit by simmering it in a flavored syrup deepens its flavor, softens its flesh, and gives it a shiny, almost translucent appearance.

The sugar in a poaching syrup penetrates the fruit and keeps it firm during and after cooking. Sugar also slows the cooking process, so the fruit takes longer to cook and absorbs more flavor. Use less sugar for firmer fruits so that the heat can more easily penetrate the center; use more sugar for soft, delicate fruits to help keep them firm. For firm or slightly underripe fruit, use a light syrup (1/4 to 1/2 cup sugar to 1 cup liquid). Poach soft or very ripe fruit in a medium syrup (²/₃ cup sugar to 1 cup liquid).

Poaching syrups are usually made with granulated sugar and water, but brown sugar, honey, and maple syrup, used in roughly the same proportions, add rich flavors and a deeper caramel color. Try fruit juice or wine for part or all of the liquid. Wines with high acid or tannin are best mixed with an equal amount of water. Reduce the amount of sugar if you use a sweet juice or wine.



Poach until the fruit is soft when pierced but still holds its shape. A red wine syrup adds color to pears.

The classic additions to a syrup are a split vanilla bean and lemon zest, but these are just a starting point. Try cinnamon sticks, whole cloves, fresh ginger, nutmeg, star anise, even black peppercorns. Fresh herbs such as mint, bay, basil, and lavender add a fresh note. After poaching, you can reduce the syrup to a glaze to use as a sauce.

Here are the basic steps for poaching fruit:

- Choose firm but not overly ripe fruit. Peel fruit with thick skins, like pears.
- Make a syrup in a deep pan. Be sure to make enough to completely cover the fruit.
- Lower the fruit into the boiling syrup and reduce the heat to a simmer. Rapid boiling will damage the fruit.
- ◆ Cover the fruit with parchment to help it cook more evenly. Don't stir or the fruit may break apart.
- ◆ Test by piercing the fruit with a knife; the tip should slide in easily. Poaching can take a few minutes to an hour.
- ◆ Let firmer fruit cool in the syrup. It will absorb more flavor and won't wrinkle as it cools. If the fruit is soft, remove it and cool it on a plate.

The safe temperature zone for food

Close to 90% of all foodborne illness is caused by something we can control—temperature.

The range at which bacteria can survive and grow enough to make us sick is between 40° and 140°F. The extremes of the danger zone are much less dangerous than the center, however. Bacteria growth rate slows dramatically below 70°F and above 120°F. The real concern is keeping food below 70°F (room temperature) and above 120°F.

COOL FOOD QUICKLY SO BACTERIA CAN'T GROW

Obviously, we can't avoid the danger zone altogether, or we wouldn't be able to cook or cool food. But we can move the food rapidly through this zone by heating and cooling it as quickly as possible. Here are a few tips:

- Defrost food in the refrigerator. It takes longer but prevents the food from sitting at room temperature.
- Defrost food under cool running water (below 70°F) if you're in a hurry.
- ◆ Cook the food immediately if you defrosted it in a microwave. Microwaves heat unevenly, and parts of the food may rise above 70°F during defrost.
- ◆ Chill food to just below 70°F in an ice bath before refrigerating. (Refrigerators do a poor job of chilling large amounts of food.)
- Divide large amounts of food into smaller batches to speed chilling.

Cutting a chiffonade

Slender strands of basil, wide ribbons of spinach, and shreds of sorrel are all known as chiffonades. Cutting a chiffonade (French for "made of rags") is a classic technique for slicing leafy vegetables and herbs. Greens cut into a chiffonade don't discolor or wilt as quickly as when they're chopped. A chiffonade of a delicate herb, like basil or mint, leaves the herb's volatile oils intact, so its flavor doesn't fade as fast.

To cut a chiffonade, first remove fibrous ribs and tough



Use a sharp knife to cut a chiffonade. Roll the leaves tightly and cut all the way through.

stems. Cut larger leaves, such as cabbage or romaine lettuce, in half lengthwise and remove the center rib with a knife. Stack three or four leaves, with the larger ones on the bottom. Then, starting on one side (not at the base of the leaves) roll the stack into a tight cylinder.

Hold the cylinder securely and slice it neatly into shreds. Use a sharp knife so that each slice separates from the rest, and you don't end up with pieces strung together paperdoll-style.

Molly Stevens is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. ◆



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Starch Makes Rice Sticky or Fluffy

When an American chef makes rice pilaf, she begins with raw long-grain rice. Once cooked, the individual grains remain pleasantly separate, soft but not sticky.

When a Japanese chef prepares sushi, he reaches for cooked short-grain rice. He can easily shape the sticky rice into mounds on which to lay pieces of fish, or he can pack it neatly into sushi rolls.

Switch the two kinds of rice and you'd get pilaf that clumps together and sushi rolls that fall apart.

Before you cook rice, it helps to understand its specific characteristics. The most important factor is the composition of the rice's starch.

WHAT IS STARCH?

Starch is made through photosynthesis. Using energy from the sun, plants combine carbon dioxide and water into simple glucose, or sugar molecules. These molecules either link into great long chains to make the kind of starch called amylose, or they link into



Short-grain rice exudes more starch, making it sticky. Sushi chefs prefer short-grain rice: its stickier texture also makes it easier to eat with chopsticks.



Long-grain rice is perfect for pilaf. The grains stay separate after cooking, but don't let the rice cool or it will harden.

many short, branched chains to make amylopectin. Both kinds of starch are packed tightly together in granules.

All plants contain both types of starch but with different ratios of amylose and amylopectin. Long-grain rice has more amylose; short-grain has more amylopectin.

Heat makes rice exude starch, some kinds more than others. When you heat starch in a liquid, the molecules of both the starch and the liquid move faster, and water seeps into the granules. As the temperature rises, more water gets in and the granules swell. Somewhere near the boiling point of water, some of the swollen granules pop, and starch rushes out into the liquid. (When you're making a sauce or a gravy, this is when it thickens.)

In short-grain rice, the starch granules (which are

mostly amylopectin) swell and pop at around 160° to 170°F. High-amylose long-grain rice doesn't finish swelling until about 200°F, meaning that in the same cooking time, it gives off less starch than short-grain does, which means that long-grain rice stays separate. Medium-grain rice is between the two in its starch characteristics.

Rice for risotto has special attributes. Arborio rice, used to make the Italian rice dish called risotto, is a medium-grain rice (though it's often called short-grain rice because its plump shape after cooking makes it look short). Risotto is cooked by adding a little liquid at a time, which makes its surface granules exude a lot of starch while its center remains firm.

STARCH TROUBLES IN LONG-GRAIN RICE

As cooked long-grain rice cools, those long amylose molecules move more slowly and bond tightly to each other. Long-grain rice, because it has more amylose

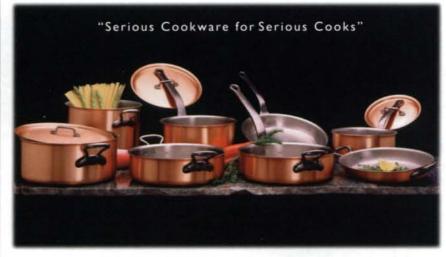
CHOOSING THE RIGHT RICE FOR THE DISH

All rice is grouped into three categories: long-grain (the length is at least three times the width), medium-grain (the length is about two times the width), and short-grain (the length is less than two times the width). Long-grain and short-grain rices are not interchangeable; medium-grain rice is similar to short-grain.

Type of rice	Description	Popular types	Good for	Problems
Long-grain	High in amylose. Cooks into fluffy, separate grains.	Carolina, basmati, jasmine.	Rice pilafs, rice salads (tossed with dressing while warm), white rice side dishes.	Cooled rice becomes rock-hard and stays hard unless reheated and served warm.
Medium-grain	Lower in amylose than long-grain, but not as low as short-grain. Can be used in place of short-grain.	Arborio, black japonica.	Rice salads, rice puddings, risottos.	Can clump as it cools.
Short-grain	High in amylopectin and low in amylose. Cooks soft and sticky.	Sushi, Spanish, pearl.	Sushi, paellas, stir-fries, rice puddings.	Can become mushy if cooked with too much liquid.



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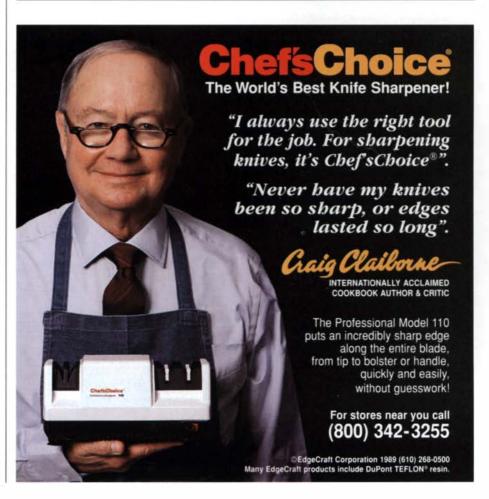
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FOOD SCIENCE

than short-grain, can become rock-hard.

Not only does cooked long-grain rice harden, but once cooled, much of its starch becomes insoluble and it won't soften even if you add liquid. If you reheat the rice, the bonds of amylose will break, and the rice will become soft again. But in dishes where the rice is cooked and chilled but not reheated—as in rice salads—amylose crystallization can be disastrous. You end up with pebble-like rice that isn't softened even by a vinaigrette.

To avoid this problem, mix the rice with moist ingredients (such as vinaigrette in the case of rice salad) while the rice is still hot from cooking. The additional liquid soaks in to keep the amylose molecules separate so they



Creamy with a "bite" is the hallmark of great risotto. Cooking arborio rice in a little liquid makes the starch granules on the outside of the rice grains pop, while the center granules only swell. The popped granules exude starch, making the dish creamy, while the unpopped granules keep the centers of the grains firm.

can't bond and harden. Alternatively, you can use medium-grain rice, which has less amylose and will not harden as it cools.

Long-grain rice can also cause pudding problems. While you can use cooled and

hardened rice in rice pudding, you'll want to eat it while it's still warm. Once cooled, the amylose will make the rice hard once again.

Long-grain rice can contribute to another problem in rice pudding—the settling of

the rice. If it's not cooked long enough, or if it has been cooked and cooled, it doesn't exude starch to aid in thickening. If the custard doesn't thicken fast enough to suspend the rice, the rice falls to the bottom of the dish.

For this reason, many rice pudding recipes call for shortor medium-grain rice, which, because it exudes starch at a lower temperature, is a safer bet. Many long-grain rice pudding recipes either initially overcook the rice so that it's very starchy, or they call for enough eggs and a high cooking temperature to help set the pudding quickly.

Shirley O. Corriher, a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, is the author of Cook Wise (to be published by William Morrow this summer).

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Refreshing

FLAVORINGS

Mint

Cummer is a great time to think mint. Not only is the herb running rampant in gardens everywhere, but its fresh, cooling flavor perfectly complements summer fare. I'm not only talking about lemonade and iced tea, though a sprig of mint is always welcome in my glass. I'm talking about chilled fresh pea soup garnished with a chiffonade of mint, fruit salads and cold grain salads like tabbouleh punctuated with chopped mint leaves, and grilled vegetables flavored with a minty marinade.

Although there are hundreds of types of mint, spearmint and peppermint are the most popular varieties for cooking and baking.

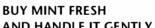
At the supermarket, you'll find spearmint both fresh and dried. Peppermint is usually only available as an extract, which is a mixture of the plant's concentrated natural oils and alcohol. Peppermint and spearmint are also sold as pure oils, which are much more potent than extracts and should be handled accordingly.

Peppermint (Mentha piperita) has a more pronounced flavor and is used mostly in baking and confectionery. The hallmark of peppermint is the cooling sensation you get in your mouth as you in-

spice department. Fresh and minty tasting, but with no cooling sensation, milder spearmint is more commonly used in savory dishes.

MINT FLAVORS A WIDE RANGE OF FOODS

On English tables, spearmint—usually in the form of mint jelly—traditionally accompanies lamb. A favorite drink in Morocco is a sweet tea made by steeping green tea, sugar, and spearmint. In India, cucumber raita (a yogurt dip served to counter hot foods) isn't complete without a healthy dose of mint. In Southeast Asia, mint is usually added to a cooked dish just as it's about to be served, sometimes along with cilantro and basil. Mint has an affinity for these aromatic herbs, as well as for flavorings such as parsley, cardamom, lemongrass, and chiles.



I almost always use fresh mint, which is what most recipes call for, although dried is traditionally favored in some long-cooked Middle Eastern dishes.

When buying fresh mint, look for unblemished, bright green leaves with a fresh. minty fragrance. Like most herbs, fresh mint is best used right away. If you have a large bunch, put the stems in a glass of water and cover the leaves with a plastic bag. Refrigerate and change the water every couple of days; your mint will stay fresh and fragrant for as long as a week.

Chop mint with your sharpest knife. Most recipes call for chopped mint leaves. though sometimes whole leaves or a pretty chiffonade are wanted. Like many herbs, mint bruises easily, and when bruised, it loses its volatile. flavorful oils. To keep bruising to a minimum, use a sharp, dry knife for chopping and slicing.

Chop mint just before using it; its volatile oils evaporate quickly. These oils also fade when heated, which is why fresh mint is often added toward the end of cooking.

Lynn Alley is the author of Lost Arts (Ten Speed Press, 1995), a cook's guide to making handmade ingredients. •

AND HANDLE IT GENTLY

EXPERIMENT WITH MINT

- Flavor iced tea with sprigs of fresh mint, tarragon, and basil.
- ◆ Toss steamed new potatoes, fresh peas, or sliced carrots with butter and chopped mint.
- Give pesto a fresh twist by using equal amounts of mint and basil.
- ◆ Marinate eggplant and zucchini in olive oil, red-wine vinegar, and chopped fresh mint before grilling.
- Add fresh mint to citrus or melon salsas.
- ◆ Tie sprigs of mint in a bouquet garni, along with thyme, parsley, and rosemary, to flavor braised lamb.
- Use mint extract as you would vanilla extract.
- ◆ Flavor crème anglaise by steeping chopped mint in the simmering milk. Strain the milk before adding other ingredients.

chocolate, the one used, of course, to flavor peppermint candy. Though peppermint is mostly used in extract form. I often add chopped leaves to fudge. Spearmint (Mentha spi-

Spearmint is what you'll find fresh

at the supermarket. Other varieties

of mint, such as apple mint, orange

mint, and lemon mint, taste subtly

like the fruits their names imply.

Try growing some in an herb pot.

hale. This is the mint with

enough spunk to stand up to

MENTHA

SPICATA

cata) is what you'll find fresh in your supermarket's produce section and dried in the



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Cookbooks to Savor the Lusty Fare of Spain

Before I traveled to Spain as a wide-eyed high school student, I thought there was onlyonekind of food: the Italian American kind my mother made. But in Spain, the food I found was both exotic and comfortable at the same time: freshly caught seafood, cured meats and aged cheeses, brine-cured olives and coldpressed extra-virgin olive oil, an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables. No wonder I liked Spanish food: it was a lot like the food I'd grown up on.

Years later, I returned to Spain, met my future wife (a woman from the region of Andalucia), and have since learned more than I'd ever dreamed about the foods of Spain. Through my wife's family, whose livelihood has been closely aligned with food for generations (including raising Spain's unique

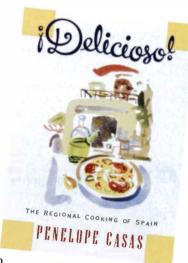
acorn-fed, black-hoofed pigs for the cured ham known as jamón serrano), I've learned to appreciate not only the diversity of Spanish cuisine but also its honest simplicity.

At home in New York, I've happily found several outstanding cookbooks to help me better understand the foods of my adopted country.

Penelope Casas' comprehensive *The Foods & Wines* of *Spain*, with its suggested lusty flavors and straightforward preparation.

A good example is the tortilla española, a frittata-like potato omelet. Thin slices of potato and onion are sautéed in olive oil until tender. Then beaten eggs are combined with the potato mixture and cooked until the omelet is golden brown.

All of Casas' recipes are true to their origins. I recently



Casas' newest book explores the regional cuisines of Spain, from the gazpachos of Andalucia to the rices of El Levante.

When *iDelicioso!*, Casas' latest contribution to Spanish cooking, appeared in bookstores last year, I was excited to find that the book explores the regional differences in Spanish cooking. Even though Spain is smaller than the state of Texas, its cuisine is extremely diverse and varies distinctively from region to region.

Every chapter of iDelicioso! is devoted to a different region of Spain, each with its own culinary identity. For example, Chapter Six, "Southeastern Coastal Spain (El Levante)," is subtitled "Region of the Rices." Casas gives us rice dishes that go beyond the renowned paellas of the area and exposes us to other dishes popular in the region, such as fideuá alicantina, a paella-like seafood dish made with thin noodles, served with a garlicky mayonnaise—a delicious specialty rarely found elsewhere.

Little is written about the culinary traditions of Spain's Canary Islands, so Casas' inclusion of this "Region of the Mojos" (or sauces) is welcome. The islands, located in the Atlantic off the coast of

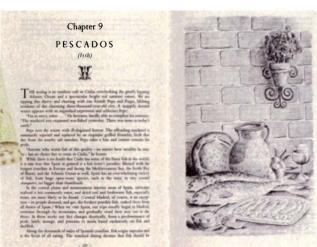
Brazo de gitano is a luscious, custard-filled, jelly-roll-style cake that translates as "arm of a gypsy."

menus, buyers' guide, and extensive information on wines, makes Spanish cooking accessible to everyone. Organized by courses from tapas (appetizers) to postres (desserts), the book focuses on traditional dishes, with

tried two recipes, *empanadillas* de carne, mini meat pies from northwest Galicia, and brazo de gitano, a luscious, custardfilled, jelly-roll-style cake that literally translates as "arm of a gypsy." Both were as delicious as the food I've eaten in Spain.

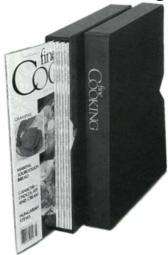


Penelope Casas' classic book introduced a generation of American cooks to the food of Spain.



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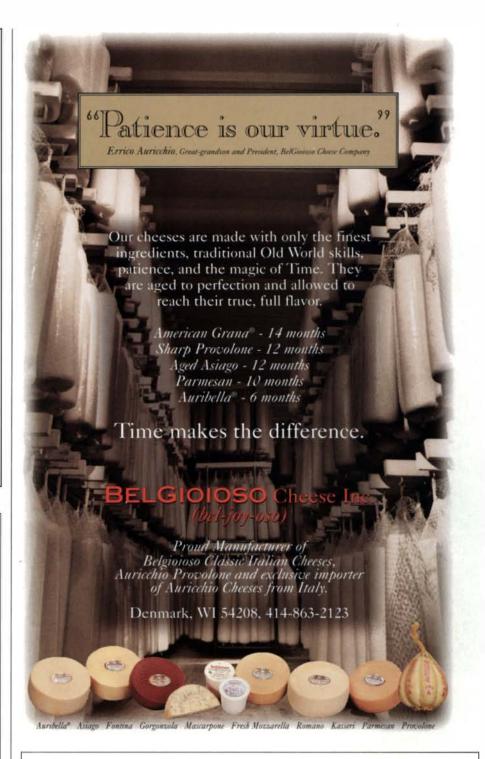
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REVIEWS

Northwest Africa, have a unique tropical cuisine and an affinity for dipping sauces, made from herbs, peppers, and olive oil, that are served alongside meats, poultry, fish, and vegetables. I especially enjoyed making Casas' recipe for *mojo picón*, a spicy red

and color photographs make this book as interesting to look at as it is to cook from.

I particularly enjoyed the chapter on fish and shellfish. Seafood is an important element in Spanish cooking, and Spanish cooks have special ways of preparing it. I loved the recipe for merluza a la gallega (Galicianstyle hake), a simple fish dish with fresh peas, olive oil, and sweet paprika

**Total and sweet paprika*

**Total and

Beautiful and authoritative, The Heritage of Spanish Cooking features a wide range of authentic Spanish recipes.

sauce, and serving it with papas arrugadas, or "wrinkled potatoes."

As in all her cookbooks, Casas provides painstakingly detailed instructions as well as a glossary and a buyers' guide, making this book easy to use even if you don't live near a large urban area.

Once you've experimented with the recipes in Casas' cookbooks, you can learn more about the ingredients and dishes that make up

that lets the flavor of the fish shine through. I substituted monkfish for hake with terrific results.

Spanish cooking in The Her-

itage of Spanish Cooking.

Written by two of Spain's lead-

ing food authorities, Alicia

Ríos and Lourdes March, this

is a book of substance with

authentic Spanish regional

recipes and solid culinary his-

tory. The luxurious artwork

One region of Spain that captured many people's attention during the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona is Catalonia. Fortunately for food lovers, the Olympics coincided with the publication of a wonderfully authentic book on Catalan cuisine: *The Catalan Country Kitchen*. Marimar Torres, from a Spanish

winemaking family, felt compelled to write about her native cuisine after marrying an American, moving to California, and trying to describe the unique cuisine of this northeastern corner of Spain to her new friends.

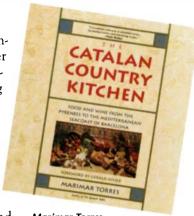
Characterized by the diversity of both its geography (mountainous and coastal) and its history (Italian, Jewish, and Arabic influences), Catalan cuisine is an intriguing mix of savory and sweet. Meaty stews, such as Rabbit in Red Wine with Chocolate, Tomatoes & Herbs or Rosalia's Chicken with Mushrooms, Onions & Carrots in Almond-Saffron Sauce, are as typical as a simple salad of Fava Beans, Cured Ham & Mint or an elegant Mushroom Flan in Port Cream Sauce. Torres' vineyard and grape notes are insightful and round out her compelling portrait of Catalan cooking.

Tom Lacalamita is a kitchenequipment expert and cookbook author. Simon & Schuster has just published his latest book, The Ultimate Pressure Cooker Cookbook. ◆

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

The Foods & Wines of Spain, by Penelope Casas. Knopf, 1982. \$26.50, hardcover; 457 pp. ISBN 0-394-51348-7. ¡Delicioso!, by Penelope Casas. Knopf, 1996. \$30, hardcover; 458 pp. ISBN 0-679-43055-5. The Heritage of Spanish Cooking, by Alicia Ríos & Lourdes March. Random House, 1992. \$45, hardcover; 256 pp. ISBN 0-679-41628-5.

The Catalan Country Kitchen, by Marimar Torres. Addison-Wesley, 1992. \$14.95, softcover; 179 pp. ISBN 0-201-62469-9.



Marimar Torres transforms the food of her Catalonian childhood into delicious, accessible recipes.

ALSO RECOMMENDED

Another excellent book on Catalan cooking, Catalan Cuisine, by Colman Andrews, is out of print but worth tracking down for its historical insight, authentic recipes, and sources. You can still find it in cookbook stores and through mail-order sources (see below). Likewise, three other excellent Spanish cookbooks, all originally published in England, are worth seeking out. Two are by Elisabeth Luard, an English journalist and artist who lived in the hilly region of Andalucia for several years. Her illustrations in The Flavors of Andalucia (Collins & Brown) are as charming as her recipes for Gypsy-Style Eggs and Prawns in Raincoats. And La Ina Book of Tapas (Simon & Schuster UK) is Luard's authentic collection of tapas. Another excellent author. Maria José Sevilla. gives a fascinating look at the unique seaside cuisine of the Basque region in Life & Food in the Basque Country.

Sources for these books include Kitchen Arts & Letters in New York (212/876-5550); the Books for Cooks catalogue (800/355-CHEF); and Jessica's Biscuit Cookbook Catalogue (800/878-4264).



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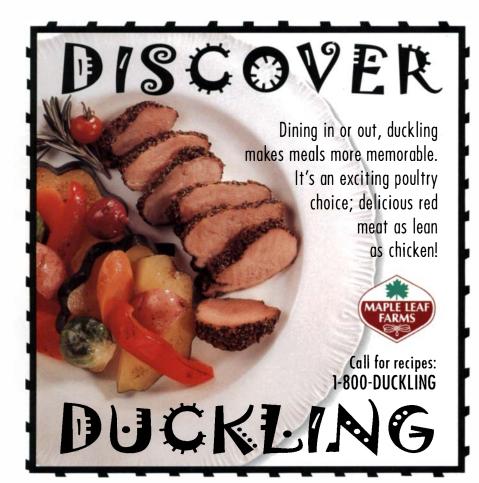
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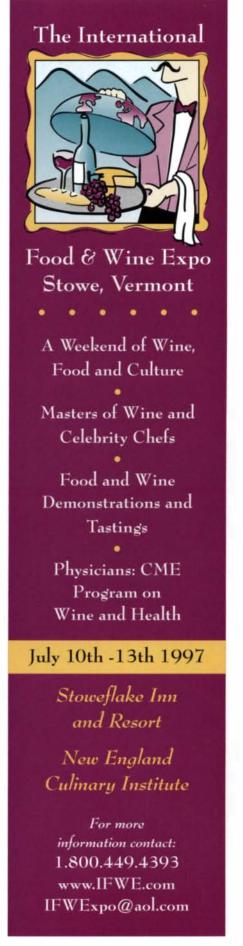
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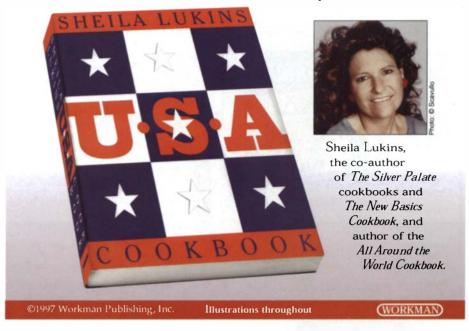
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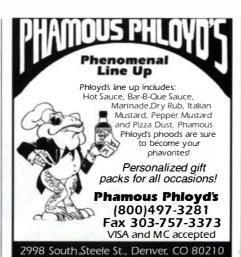


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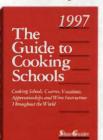


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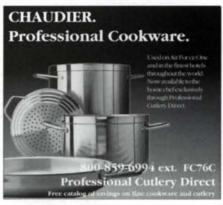
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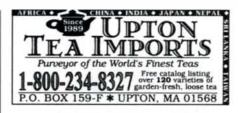
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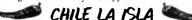
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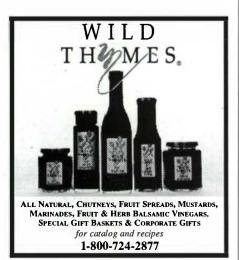
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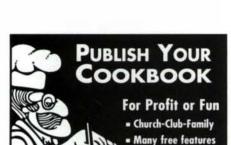
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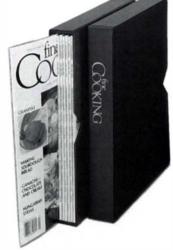
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		total	from fat	(g)	(g)	total	sat	mono	poly	(mg)	(mg)	<i>(g)</i>	
Grilled Vegetable Sandwich	34	690	350	20	69	39	10	24	4	25	1210	9	
Sun-Dried Tomato & Olive Spread	34	60	50	0	3	5	1	4	0	0	140	1	per tablespoon
Pork Loin Sandwich	34	710	270	55	57	30	8	16	3	135	1070	7	
Apple Butter	35	45	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	35	1	per tablespoon
Wehani Rice & Barley Salad	35	190	100	3	22	11	1	8	1	0	170	3	per ½ cup
Chocolate Cupcakes w/Frosting	35	360	160	5	52	18	7	5	4	35	170	3	per cupcake
Fettuccine w/Tomatoes, Capers, Olives	38	670	220	27	87	25	3	17	3	0	960	5	
Pasta Shells w/Chickpeas, Fennel	39	850	230	36	118	26	4	16	4	35	1390	11	
Cavatelli w/Arugula & Ricotta Salata	39	800	300	24	99	33	11	18	3	45	790	5	
Green Beans w/Lemon Vinaigrette	42	190	150	3	11	17	1	9	5	5	230	5	
Warm Potatoes w/Basil Vinaigrette	43	390	230	5	38	25	2	15	7	0	340	4	
Quick-Cooking Ratatouille	43	230	170	3	17	19	3	13	2	0	280	6	
Sautéed Sugar Snap Peas & Cucumbers	43	140	60	4	17	7	.1	4	2	0	410	7	
Tandoori Chicken	45	430	190	52	7	21	9	7	3	175	790	1	based on 6 oz. serving
Green Tomatoes Fried in Olive Oil	48	200	120	3	18	14	2	10	1	0	500	3	
Fiery Green Tomato Salsa	48	45	20	1	6	2	0.5	1.0	0.5	0	130	1	per ¼ cup
Parmesan-Crusted Green Tomato Gratin	49	270	160	10	20	17	7	6	3	20	810	4	
Soy-Glazed Snapper	53	490	170	50	25	19	3	7	7	85	2700	1	
Mackerel Provençal	54	470	310	30	8	35	7	16	9	105	1040	2	
Grilled Salmon w/Red Pepper Aioli	54	800	510	65	4	56	8	34	12	220	470	1	
No-Fail Butter Tart Crust	57	150	80	2	15	10	5	3	1	40	60	1	1/12 crust
Peach & Mascarpone Filling	57	280	190	4	20	21	14	4	2	60	15	2	¹ ∕ ₁₂ filling
Peach & Mascarpone Tart	57	430	270	6	35	31	19	7	3	100	75	2	1/12 filled tart
Pad Thai	62	740	530	19	42	59	10	29	17	120	510	3	based on two servings
Summer Pudding	71	360	30	7	78	3	1.0	1.0	0.5	5	330	4	based on six servings

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at The Food Consulting Company of San Diego, California. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in

the calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used.

Those Drop-In

Guests

The letters are always the same. "A few months ago, unexpected company dropped in for dinner," someone writes to a cooking magazine. "I was stymied until I remembered that there happened to be a half a tenderloin and a few cooked lobsters in the refrigerator. Using some lemongrass and four fresh figs I also found in the fridge, I quickly improvised a sauce, diced the meat and lobster, and tossed them together with fresh orecchiette. crème fraîche, and Champagne to produce what I dubbed 'Pasta à la My Last Name.' My friends were so delighted with the unexpected flavor combination that the dish has become a staple in our house."

Whenever I read this kind of letter, my first thought is, Do you have to feed guests who drop in at dinnertime? Why can't you just tell them to go away? Then I begin to wonder. What would this letter-writer name a dish she concocted from the contents of my refrigerator? Because I can tell you already I won't let it be named after me.

People who throw delicious meals together on the spur of the moment certainly seem to keep a lot of high-quality left-overs around. When I have leftover tenderloin, I know about it—I don't suddenly open the fridge and "find" it there. The kind of things I find

are ancient foil-topped containers that I'm afraid to open, much less blithely combine with the contents of other foil-topped containers.

Just for kicks, I set myself the challenge of feeding unexpected company a meal consisting entirely of whatever I happened to have on hand.

I called my friends Rex and Polly. "Drop by for dinner un-

see if it had magically become a treasure-trove of delicious, well-organized ingredients while I wasn't looking.

A gallon of milk. A pound of butter. Half a container of heavy cream. A small wedge of Parmesan; a larger wedge of sharp Cheddar. Some hummus. One serving of sesame noodles. A big hunk of suet for the birdfeeder. A tired bunch

What do you do with a fridge containing a moldy lemon, some old

hummus, and 5 billion jars of jam?

expectedly," I said. "Tonight," I added.

"Why?" asked Polly. I didn't explain. It was too complicated, and I knew they wouldn't dare come over if I told them the truth.

"I'm just in a mood to cook," I lied. Then I hung up and opened my refrigerator to

of scallions, a wedge of cantaloupe, a bruised apple, and six lemons, one of them blue with mold. Cornmeal, oatmeal, wheat germ, and flour. (I have a problem with pantry moths.) Seven eggs. And literally, without exaggeration, 5 billion half-full jars of chutneys, jams—four jars of apricot

preserves alone—and mustards. And bean dip and jalapeños and mayonnaise and chilioiland an old experiment of my son's that involved trying to melt a GI Joe in vinegar.

Short of putting everything in a bowl and stirring it, I couldn't see what my next step should be. Cheese straws? And to go with them, some kind of cantaloupe/sesame noodle salad? But that wouldn't serve more than one person, and it would involve pretense more than improvisation. ("Just pretend that this tastes good," I would tell Rex and Polly.)

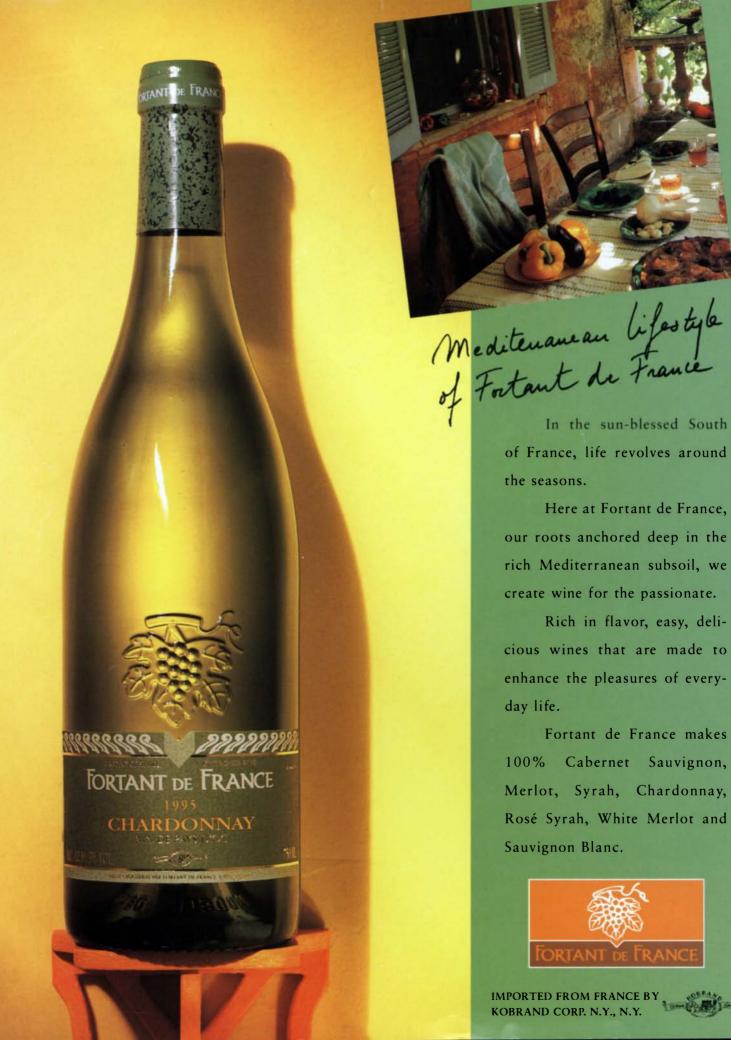
Well, there were still those eggs, and the cream, and the cheese. Shirred eggs! An old-time favorite! Of course it would make *me* sick—I can't stand any dish where the yolks and whites are separate—but the point is to please my *guests*. To go with the eggs, I could whip up some cornbread, maybe with scallions in it.

"Brunch for dinner!" I imagined myself exclaiming. And then I imagined their response....

Well, I've got my letter now.

"When unexpected company dropped by for dinner, I was stymied—until I remembered that the worst takeout meal would be better than what I could whip up on the spur of the moment. So we all decided to go to a restaurant instead. 'Just let me clean out the fridge first,' I told my friends, 'There's a lot of stuff I need to throw away.'"

Ann Hodgman is the author of forty children's books. She lives in Washington, Connecticut, and is working on her third cookbook.



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